



Casa (dei Bambini) Montessori School
150 Powers Ferry Road, Marietta, GA 30067
(770) 973-2731

PARENT HANDBOOK

with COVID-19 Amendment

Welcome to Casa Montessori School!

Dear Families,

I am pleased to welcome new & returning families to Casa Montessori School! We pride ourselves on being a strong and connected community. As members of that community, we all have an important role to play.

This Parent Handbook is designed as a reference tool for you to access information about Casa Montessori School's policies and procedures. The partnership between parents, teachers and administrators is key to a successful relationship and our goal is to provide the tools for good communication from the start.

Please familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook and refer back to it as needed throughout the school year. If you have questions or comments, please direct them to the Front Office, (info@casamontessori.com).

I look forward to an exciting and productive school year. Thank you for choosing Casa Montessori School and welcome to the Casa community!

Suzanne Maria Johnson, Directress

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About Casa Montessori

Our History

After working as an assistant in her son's Montessori classroom, Mrs. Florence Johnson joined the second group of Montessori teachers to be trained in the Atlanta Area. After teaching for a few years, Mrs. Johnson was asked by several parents to open her own school in the Marietta area. In 1974, after recruiting additional students, securing a temporary location, and gaining Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) accreditation, Casa dei Bambini Montessori School was established with one Primary classroom of 28 children. One year later, the school — named after Dr. Maria Montessori's original school founded in 1906 in Italy — moved to its permanent home on Powers Ferry Road.

By 1987, Casa Montessori had grown to include four Primary classrooms and interest in an Elementary program had risen steadily among Casa's parents. There was sufficient demand to support a Lower Elementary program for 6-9 year olds. The Upper Elementary program for 9-12 year olds followed in 1990.

In 2011, Mrs. Johnson's daughter, Suzanne Johnson, stepped into her mother's shoes as Directress after obtaining her Master's Degree in Education from the University of Loyola, Baltimore. Suzanne carries on Florence's vision of a multi-cultural Montessori community that continues to nurture children. In 2014, Suzanne expanded Casa's program to include before and after school activities. And in 2015, Casa began its first Toddler program and offered an Extended Day Primary class for children under 5 years old.

Mission Statement

Casa Montessori School's mission is to provide the best possible education to nurture your child's full potential. We strive to motivate students from within by building upon their natural curiosity and fueling a love for learning. We provide a hands-on and collaborative learning environment that fosters independence, critical thinking skills, and whole-child growth through the proven, authentic Montessori approach to education.

“The goal of education should not be to fill the child with facts but rather to cultivate his/her own natural desire to learn.” — Maria Montessori

At Casa Montessori, we believe in education for life.

Casa Montessori School has a robust community of parents, students, staff, and supporters working together to nurture the full potential of every child. Casa Montessori welcomes children of all races, colors, religions, and national origins.

Montessori Curriculum

The term “Montessori” embodies both a philosophy and a method of education. The programs at our school focus on the development of each child’s full potential, facilitated by teachers specially trained in the Montessori method and philosophy. Our teachers use both concrete teaching materials and a well-designed innovative curriculum tailored to the toddler-aged child, and through each three-year cycle from the Primary program through both levels of the elementary program.

The three-year age range at each level of our program provides a multitude of benefits that are immediately apparent when observing a typical Montessori classroom. Younger children in each group have an opportunity to observe and imitate the older students as they work. Older students have an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge by explaining what they are doing and assisting younger children. The third year or final year in the cycle is truly empowering to the children, both socially and academically. Each child can learn and develop at his own pace within a classroom that accommodates many levels of ability and complexity.

The Montessori teacher is specifically trained to observe each child and to design lessons based on that child’s natural curiosity and love of learning. The teacher is responsible for preparing the educational environment within each classroom and for presenting lessons in that environment. During the course of a day, the teacher will demonstrate a wide array of concrete sensorial materials and sequential activities through individual instruction. The child soon learns to associate abstract concepts with hands-on experience.

Accreditation

Casa Montessori School is accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). This accreditation means the school and its teachers perform according to the highest standards of Montessori philosophy. Casa Montessori is also accredited with quality by the Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC).



Partnership Agreement

The relationship between the family and the school is essential to success for the child. In order to ensure that the best relationship is formed, we enter into this Partnership Agreement with parents.

What does the school expect from parents?

- *Make continuing efforts both to understand and to embrace the Montessori approach and to work in partnership with the school.*

Casa Montessori School desires parents who understand and embrace our mission. To that end, we help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education throughout the school year. Parents are expected to attend regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences, parent meetings, and Montessori education events and to read articles provided. Also, parents should familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook and other school publications.

- *Demonstrate respect for all adults and children, the school, and the school's programs.*

Through your behavior, you contribute to your child's moral development and to the culture and climate of the school. Model for your child respect: for themselves, their work, their classmates, parents of classmates, teachers and other school staff. Respect begins with civility and deepens into trust. Our most fundamental behavioral guidelines for the children are: respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment. We expect the same from parents and school staff at all times and in all relationships within the school community. Support your child by speaking of his teachers, classmates and school in positive terms. Respect and abide by the school's policies and procedures. Honor your commitments. Look for ways to make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

- *Strive to parent according to Montessori principles.*

Learn as much as you can about Montessori principles as they apply to your interactions with your child and preparation of the home environment. Remember that you should never do for the child what he is able to do for himself. Prepare the home so that you allow your child to engage in all of the simple tasks of practical life. Children develop a love of learning and become responsible, independent and capable when parents' values and expectations are consistent with those of the school.

You have chosen Montessori education for your family. Extra academic activities are not necessary (working with your child at home, tutoring, outside math programs, etc.) and, in fact, undermine the Montessori principles.

The Montessori philosophy is built on concrete experiences for the young child. Casa Montessori School encourages parents to eliminate, or at the very least, limit exposure to television and other electronics, including computers.

- *Maintain active, direct and respectful, two-way communication with the school.*

Read communications that are sent home including memos, letters, newsletters and calendars. Inform the school in a timely fashion of pertinent changes in your child's life as well as any changes to your contact information.

What can parents reasonably expect from the school?

- *Casa Montessori School maintains accreditation by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and high standards for training and professionalism among its faculty.*

The Association Montessori Internationale was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori to maintain the integrity of her life's work, and to ensure that it would be perpetuated after her death.

AMI accreditation ensures: an AMI trained teacher at the appropriate age level for each class; a consultation by an AMI trained consultant once every three years; a complete set of materials for each class from a manufacturer authorized by AMI; classes made up of children representing a three year age range, between 28-35 children in each class, including a well balanced division of ages to ensure social development; morning sessions five days per week for the full class, with an afternoon session consisting of two to three hours of Montessori activities for the older children in the primary class; an uninterrupted three-hour work cycle each morning.

- *Casa Montessori School aspires to fulfill its mission as an AMI Montessori School.*

As a Montessori school, we are different from traditional schools. Our first commitment is to the multi-dimensional development of the child. Montessori children amass a great deal of factual knowledge in school. However, our aim is for each child to be far more than a repository of this information: we guide

each child to think for himself. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are important, yet they represent only one dimension of our aspirations for your child. Equally significant is your child's social, emotional, spiritual and physical development.

- *We aim to maintain open, honest, timely, and respectful communication with you about your child and about information affecting the school community.*

There are two regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences each year. In the event of special concerns, your child's teacher will contact you to discuss these concerns. Each Casa teacher is a well-trained professional and her evaluation is confidential between parent, teacher and administration and based on direct observation of your child. All parent conferences are done face to face where the teacher will offer her current best understanding of your child's progress, strengths and needs. The teacher's observations may be augmented by input from administration.

In addition to the parent-teacher conferences, Casa Montessori School also distributes weekly parent memos, a school calendar and frequent communication. We hold regularly scheduled parent education nights as well as occasional morning parent education meetings.

- *The administration of Casa Montessori School focuses on the needs of the individual child in harmony with the life of the community. All decisions are driven by our mission to provide a sound foundation in basic education while aiding in the development of character, concentration, independence and a respect for the rights of others.*

Administrative staff works with all aspects of the school: students, parents, extended family, faculty, alumni, prospective parents, professional visitors, government officials, other schools and educational organizations, and the general public. In your interactions with administration, you can expect professional, courteous, and business-like conduct, as well as mutually respectful communications.

The administration often faces decisions requiring balance of competing priorities. Sometimes those factors are mutually exclusive; sometimes equally well-intentioned adults see matters differently. In making decisions, the administration will focus on the interest of the individual child in balance with the needs of the school.

School & Program Hours

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 3:10 p.m.

	Drop Off	Program Hours	Pick Up
Toddler (Half Day) Program	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	11:40 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.
Primary (Half Day) Program	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.	11:50 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Toddler (Full Day) Program	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.	2:35 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Primary (Full Day) Program	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.	2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Elementary Program	8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	3:00 - 3:10 p.m.
Stay & Play		3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	

Admissions & Enrollment

Admissions

Casa Montessori admits students of all races, colors, religions, and national origins. Relevant age parameters include:

Toddler — 18 months to 3 years.

Primary — 3 to 6 years. Applicant must be potty trained prior to entrance.

Elementary — 6 to 12 years. Acceptance is based on the recommendation of the child's Primary teacher and after a personal interview with the Elementary teacher.

All students are enrolled on a probationary basis, including new and returning students.

Enrollment preference is given to families with a firm commitment to Montessori philosophy and who intend to keep their child in the classroom for the full cycle of the program and beyond. Classes are multi-aged and Casa will make every reasonable effort to balance each class with respect to age and gender.

Admissions policies and procedures can be found on the Admissions tab of our website.

Tuition, Deposit, Fees

For information about Casa Montessori's tuition, deposit, and fees, please refer to the Tuition & Fees section of our website.

Enrollment

In order for a child to be enrolled, parents must complete the annual registration procedure for their child, submitting any required information and updating their child's medical profile. Students may attend class only when registration and immunization documents have been processed. Please see the Annual Registration section below for more information.

Annual Registration

- Casa Montessori enrollment agreements are for continuous enrollment through 6th grade with an annual opt-out deadline of March 16. A non-refundable registration fee is also due each year by the end of March. Once the opt-out deadline has passed, enrollment will be offered to new students based on the remaining availability. *Current Casa families, regardless of level, are at risk of losing a classroom position for their child if deposits are not received by the deadline.*
- Annual registration also includes updating medical information, emergency contacts, and necessary permissions for the upcoming school year. Returning families must login to Transparent Classroom to complete this process by the end of March. **All required information is due no later than one week prior to the first day of new student orientation regardless of new or returning student status.** Failure to return the required information by this due date will result in a \$50 late registration fee and a possible change in the student's start date. Please call the Front Office with any questions regarding registration.

Class Placement

Class placements are made after careful consideration of classroom communities and individual student need. These are professional decisions made as a result of faculty and administrative discussions. Classroom placement is based on several factors — personality and developmental level of your child, space availability, social and age mix ratios per classroom, and whether your child is enrolled in Half Day or Full Day (for our Primary program). Any parental concern regarding a student's learning needs or accommodation should be directed to the student's teacher or the school directress.

Immunizations

In accordance with Georgia state law, all students are required to have a current Georgia Department of Human Resources Certificate of Immunization (form 3231) on file prior to enrollment. This form is due by the first day of school. No child will be admitted to the classroom without a complete immunization record.

Form 3231 can be obtained from your pediatrician or the Georgia Department of Health and Human Services. Out-of-state immunization records will not be accepted. When documentation expires during the school year, parents will be notified and updated documentation must then be provided to the school in order for the student to continue to attend class.

If parents choose to not have their child immunized, please note that the state of Georgia provides for only two types of exemptions: Medical or Religious. Casa Montessori School is reviewed annually for immunization compliance. If your child is exempt due to religious beliefs, parents must provide Casa with a notarized affidavit, indicating that immunization conflicts with their religious beliefs.

Families who submit medical or religious exemptions in lieu of Certificates of Immunization for their enrolled children should be aware that Casa follows the guidelines established by the CDC to determine what precautionary or containment measures may be necessary for the health and safety of all members of our school community. For example, should a Casa student or staff member have a confirmed case of the measles, all students who cannot produce written confirmation of up-to-date measles vaccination will not be permitted to attend school for 21 days after the confirmed diagnosis of the most recent case. Families who have submitted religious exemptions may submit proof of previous MMR vaccination or choose to have their children vaccinated after which students may return to school after four (4) days.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important at all stages of school enrollment; therefore, attendance should be a priority for all families. ***There are numerous breaks during the school year. Please plan your family trips out of town during school vacation times so that your students will be in class on school days.***

Tardiness

Your child misses a very special part of the day when arriving late: classmates greet each other; friends join together to choose work; the teacher plans special lessons for each student. A child feels awkward coming into the class after missing the beginning rituals of the day. It is also a disruption to the class when a child arrives late. Children are eager to see their friends and become distracted.

Carpool assistance ends promptly at 8:45 a.m. If you arrive after carpool, you must park and walk your child to the office to sign him in. Staff will walk the child to class.

Any child arriving after 9:15 a.m. will not be admitted to the class without a doctor's note.

For Full Day Primary and Elementary students: Repeated tardiness is observed and recorded by the teachers. After five (5) tardies, parents are notified and asked to correct the problem. After eight (8) tardies, parents are notified and this record is reported to the Directress. If the tardiness continues, parents may be contacted by the Directress to discuss the issue. Tardiness and absenteeism are kept on file and on your student's permanent record. Private and public schools ask for this information as part of their enrollment procedures.

If you expect your child to arrive late because of an appointment, please send a note to your child's teacher in advance so that lessons can be re-arranged according to his arrival.

Early Pick-Up

If your child is to be picked up early, please send a note to your child's teacher in advance so that lessons can be re-arranged according to his dismissal.

To pick up a child early you must sign them out at the office and your child will be brought to you.

Absences

It is important that your child is in class every day. Each child is an essential part of the classroom dynamics. Lessons are planned for children each day, thus a child's absence impacts the schedule.

We do not, however, expect you to send your child to school when he is sick or recuperating. Please reference our Illness policy found in this handbook and our COVID-19 operating plans amendment. Absences are also considered excused in the event of a family death or funeral, religious holiday, and doctor's appointment.

Please call the office when your child has an unexpected absence for sickness or other reason.

Carpool

Carpool Times

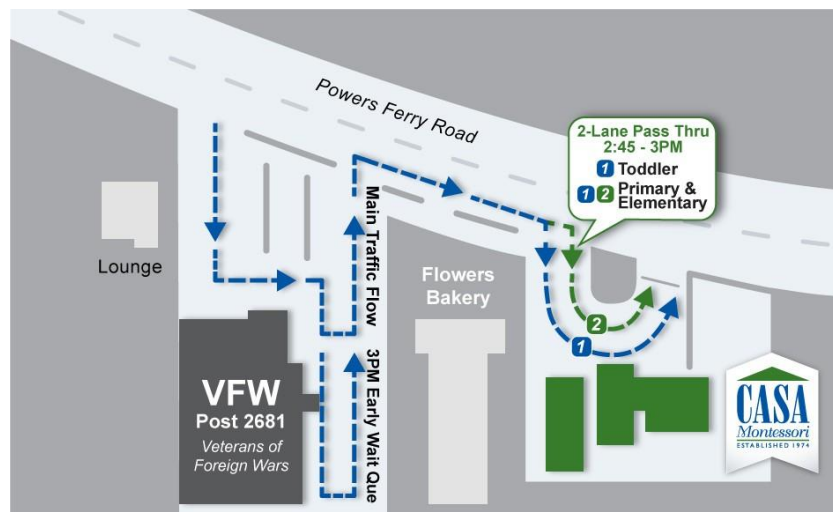
Program	(Time to pull into Casa Lot) Arrival Time	(Time to pull into Casa Lot) Dismissal Time	(Time to pull into Casa Lot) ALL SCHOOL HALF DAY Dismissal Time
Toddler HALF DAY	(8:25) 8:30-8:45 a.m.	(11:35) 11:40-11:50 a.m.	(11:35) 11:40-11:50 a.m.
Toddler FULL DAY	(8:25) 8:30-8:45 a.m.	(2:30) 2:35-2:45 p.m.	(11:35) 11:40-11:50 a.m.
Primary HALF DAY	(8:25) 8:30-8:45 a.m.	(11:45) 11:50-12:00 p.m.	(11:45) 11:50-12:00 p.m.
Primary FULL DAY	(8:25) 8:30-8:45 a.m.	(2:40) 2:45-3:00 p.m.	(11:45) 11:50-12:00 p.m.
Elementary	(8:10) 8:15-8:30 a.m.	(2:55) 3:00-3:10 p.m.	(11:55) 12:00-12:10 p.m.

Carpool Procedures

- Enter the Casa carpool line in the Veterans of Foreign Wars center (VFW) parking lot, place child's name tag on rearview mirror.
- Watch carefully to make sure there is room to pull up to the Casa lot at your designated time (see table above).
- Maintain 2 lanes in Casa lot, stay in your lane, move up as far as possible.
- A teacher or assistant will find you and help your child to/from the car.

Toddler Parents: Per the Fire Marshal, Toddler carpool must stay in Lane 1 only (see diagram below).

Elementary Parents: Please line up along the VFW wall in the afternoon (see diagram below).



For the Safety of Everyone:

- No left turns into Casa's parking lot
- No cellphone usage
- Do not change lanes
- Save conversations with all teachers for a later email/phone call
- When the bell rings for end of playtime, IMMEDIATELY return to your car
- Please note: Casa's Lot Lane 2 MUST stay completely clear until 11:40 a.m. per Fire Marshal

Departure

Please pick up your child promptly according to his or her schedule. If students have not been picked up at the end of the indicated periods listed, parents are considered late and the procedures and fees mentioned in the Late Departure section will apply.

If you need to conduct business with the school during pick-up carpool time, please park at the VFW and do so either before joining the carpool line or after picking your child up via carpool. If you need to speak to a teacher or assistant, please park at the VFW and wait until after carpool is over to do so. Safety is our first concern; therefore, all our attention is on the students during carpool.

Late Departure

Please notify the Front Office via phone as soon as possible about your potential late pick-up and anticipated arrival time. Notification does not negate the fees as listed below.

Primary students who are not picked up by 3:00 p.m. and Elementary students who are not picked up by 3:10 p.m. will be placed in our Stay & Play program and are subject to a billable late fee.

Class Trips

Class trips occur in our Elementary program and include traditional Field Trips, Going Outs, and overnight trips. When parents sign Form ELEM1 at the beginning of the school year, you give permission for your child to accompany his/her class on all trips organized and conducted by Casa Montessori School.

Class trips may look different this year depending on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Communicating Student Progress

Student progress is communicated throughout the school year via Conferences, Progress Reports, and depending upon level, testing, work samples, and collections of student work.

Conferences

All teachers conduct conferences each Fall and Spring so that teachers and parents can discuss a student's progress. Both parents are requested to attend all conferences.

Conference dates are noted on the school calendar, and sign-up begins three (3) weeks prior to the designated conference days. Parents must sign-up for a specific conference time during the allocated conference days. Parents will be provided with a link via email directing them to the online conference sign-up site. If you need help understanding the sign-up, please call the Front Office.

Please respect the teacher's schedule by choosing from among the conference times made available. Should you need additional meeting time with your child's teacher, please contact her directly and arrange a mutually convenient meeting time.

On designated conference days, care is provided for all enrolled Primary and Elementary students during their parents' scheduled conference times. Students are supervised in Stay & Play.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are intended to capture the degree of understanding and proficiency demonstrated in the classroom. Progress reports also reflect student attitude and interest. Because Montessori's progressive education is differentiated for each student, your child's experience and progress report will be specific to your child.

Testing

Standardized testing occurs in our Elementary program. The Iowa Assessments are offered to 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th year students. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is offered to 6th year students. These tests are administered in the second semester, annually.

Dates for the test are communicated via the school calendar and our weekly news email. Test results are shared with parents and become a part of the student transcript. Input from the teacher is critical to the understanding of the results.

Test scores are just one of several aspects of a student’s education profile and are not considered to be a summary of all abilities. **As such, individual results are private and should not be discussed except between teacher and parent.**

Communication

Communication with teachers through email is recommended. It is important that any issues, concerns, or feedback regarding your child be addressed directly with the teacher. Secondhand sources of information are unreliable. Please make plans to talk with teachers outside of classroom hours. Teachers will make themselves available to talk with you when students are not present. They will also check email and return your message or email within 24 hours, except for holidays and weekends.

Cultural Events

Being new to the Casa community and first flipping through our calendar can cause a bit of surprise. With a rich and established history comes a wealth of traditions. Cultural events at Casa are special traditions that date back to our school’s beginnings.

The founder of Casa Montessori, Ms. Florence Johnson, was an Italian-American woman with a love for people and education. What started as a celebration of Italian culture and the history of Dr. Montessori, the first cultural event — “Italy Day” — was hosted in the 1970’s and has carried on ever since. Ms. Johnson’s original intent was to expand the children’s worldview and expose them to what life was like outside of Marietta before world travel became more easily accessible. English Tea Party soon followed, along with French Day, Asia Day, Africa Day, and several others.

Cultural events at Casa are now time-honored special celebrations that culminate cultural studies in the Primary classrooms. After learning about the geography, history, customs, and language of a particular region, the Primary program has a special party where students can experience the sights, sounds, and tastes of that culture. Cultural events are typically on Fridays and will follow with an early dismissal for Primary students. If you would like to volunteer at one of these events, please contact your child’s teacher.

Custody Policy

In divorce or custody disputes between parents, it is Casa Montessori’s policy to not take sides. The principal interest of all faculty and staff is the well-being of the child. **It is Casa Montessori School’s policy that no employee will testify or give an opinion**

in such matters except under subpoena. In the event a guardian ad litem is appointed, and after documentation is received, teachers are permitted to speak directly to the guardian ad litem. Parents seeking to deny access to a student or a student's records by virtue of asserted sole custody must submit to the Directress legal documentation of such claim before the school will deny those rights to the other parent or guardian. It is the sole responsibility of the parents to provide to the school documentation regarding sole custody. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the parents to manage conditions and schedule in shared custody situations.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, & Weapons Policy

Drugs, tobacco, and weapons are prohibited at all times on campus and at any school event. Alcohol may not be served at any school event where students are present, whether on or off campus.

Electronic Devices & Toys

Cell Phones

Cell phone (including cellular-based watches) use is strictly prohibited for all students on campus and on class trips; and cellular devices must remain packed away, out of sight. Visible cell phones will be confiscated and returned directly to parents.

With permission, students may use school phones for necessary phone calls. Parent calls to students or teachers will NOT be forwarded directly to the classroom during school hours. Messages may be left with the Front Office.

Computers and Tablets

Casa Montessori School implements safety filters on all classroom computers, laptops, and/or tablets. Additionally, teachers determine specific research sites that are permitted for class use and only these sites may be used. Teachers also establish parameters for computer usage by all students. Personal computers and tablets are not permitted.

Toys

Please do not allow students to bring toys to school. This includes electronic toys and games as well as play jewelry, watches, and fitness trackers. If a student wants to bring personal items to school, we welcome books, CDs, pictures, items the student has made, as well as objects related to world cultures, science, and nature. If items are to

be returned, please label them. Please do not bring pets or other animals to school without first checking with your child's teacher.

Emergency Notifications

Casa Montessori uses a SMS text message system to meet critical emergency alert situations. In the event of an emergency or school closing, parents are notified via text. Casa Montessori will test this system annually with prior notice issues to all parents. **This system will not be effective unless Casa Montessori has your most up-to-date contact information on file and you have opted-in to receive the text message alerts. Therefore, please notify the Front Office in writing if your contact information changes during the school year.**

If a situation arises in which we must evacuate campus, each family will be contacted through our emergency notification system. Once we have safely arrived at our destination, parents may pick up their children at the evacuation site. **For the safety of all, students will NOT, under any circumstances, be dismissed before reaching the destination location.**

Inclement Weather

On days with hazardous weather, Casa will consult the policies of the Cobb County School System concerning school closings. However, if Cobb County Schools open late, or if Cobb County Schools ask that only teachers and staff report, then Casa Montessori will decide our school schedule on a case-by-case basis. Parents will be notified via text and email. The school's closing will also be announced on most broadcast television stations and our school website in as timely a manner as possible.

Financial Policies

Casa Montessori is a non-profit organization dependent upon tuition as its principal source of income. Student accounts must be kept up-to-date. Annual re-enrollment will only be permitted for students with up-to-date accounts.

Collection Procedures

A late fee of \$100 will be assessed on all past due payments and fees. Additionally, fees will be assessed by FACTS (Casa's tuition management system) for overdue payments or returned checks. **It is Casa Montessori's policy that if a student's tuition or fees become 60 days past due: 1) A student may be dismissed from school. 2) His/Her enrollment may be terminated without affecting the obligation**

for tuition and fees. 3) Casa will not release the student's progress reports, teacher evaluations, transcripts, or other student records. 4) Casa will not permit re-enrollment for the following year. In the event Casa initiates legal action to collect amounts due for tuition fees, the parent agrees to pay for collection costs including attorney's fees. All progress reports, teacher evaluations, transcripts, and other student records shall remain property of Casa Montessori School at all times. There will be no refund for tuition under these circumstances. There will be a \$30 charge for any checks returned by your bank for any reason.

Fees

Activity Fee

An annual Activity Fee covers things like snack, Going Outs, day trips, etc. The fee varies depending on program and can range from \$150-\$375.

After School Enrichment and Summer Camp

Payment in full for all Enrichment and Summer Camps are due by the registration deadline for each session. All accounts must be paid in full before registration for subsequent sessions will be accepted.

Tuition Assistance

Casa Montessori is committed to helping families effectively meet the cost of education to the extent the school's resources permit. Families who demonstrate financial need are eligible to apply for Tuition Assistance. To apply or to receive additional information about Tuition Assistance, please review our Tuition Assistance section of the website.

The Tuition Assistance process is confidential, utilizing a third party Financial Aid evaluation service selected by our school. The School & Student Services (SSS) built by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) is currently used as the independent service to analyze financial need and to make a recommendation regarding an award. The most recent IRS form 1040 is needed to complete the process. Applications are made online via the SSS website. Please see the Tuition Assistance section of the website for a link.

Awards

Financial Assistance awards are determined by the Casa Scholarship Committee using the SSS recommendation along with internal guidelines designed to allocate funds in a consistent manner. There is no guarantee of an award, and applications must be submitted annually for reconsideration.

Georgia Tax Credit Scholarship Program Policies

Scholarship awards under this program shall be made in conjunction with other financial assistance awards as determined by the Casa Scholarship Committee.

Awards shall be made:

- To families in such a manner as to maximize the attraction of new students and retention of existing eligible students
- To “eligible students” as defined in the SSO Bill: “Eligible student means a student who is a Georgia resident enrolled in a Georgia secondary or primary public school or eligible to enroll in a qualified pre-kindergarten program, kindergarten program or first grade; provided, however, that if the student is deemed an eligible student pursuant to this paragraph, he or she shall continue to qualify as such until he or she graduates, reaches the age of 20, or returns to public school, whichever occurs first.”

Donations to Casa Montessori under the Georgia Tax Credit Program must be made to the Apogee Scholarship Fund, a third party School Scholarship Organization (SSO) authorized under the Georgia Tax Credit Scholarship Bill. To make a donation or to obtain more information, please visit the Apogee website at www.apogee123.org. Donations in which the donor designates the donation for the benefit of a specific individual, including a dependent of the donor, cannot be accepted.

The parent or guardian to whom a scholarship award is granted must restrictively endorse the scholarship award payment from Apogee to Casa for deposit into the account of Casa Montessori School. The parent or guardian may not designate any entity or individual associated with Casa Montessori as the parent’s attorney in fact to endorse a scholarship warrant.

A participant who fails to comply with the requirements of the SSO Bill, including, but not limited to, those summarized herein, forfeits the scholarship.

Deadline and Notification Dates

Tuition Assistance applications for the upcoming school year are due by March 15th for first round consideration. Applications received after this date will be considered if funds remain after first round awards have been determined.

Tuition Deposit and Payment Options

Families that receive financial assistance awards are subject to the same deposit requirements and payment options.

Tuition

Annual tuition covers the basic cost of educating your child at Casa Montessori School. Included are the cost of instruction, materials, and classroom supplies. Tuition does not include things like snack, cultural celebrations, Going Outs, trips (all covered by the Activity Fee) nor optional fees such as after school enrichment classes, summer camps, and other discretionary student expenses that may occur by level.

Registration fee

As indicated on the enrollment contract, a registration fee is required to reserve a student's space for each school year. This fee should be made via check or cash (credit card option is available as well). **Registration Fees are non-refundable.**

Account Balance

The tuition balance is the amount due after applying the non-refundable registration fee against annual tuition. It may be paid in full directly to the school or in installments through FACTS Tuition Management.

FACTS Tuition Management

All tuition accounts, Early Care, Stay & Play charges, and other student charges can be managed through FACTS. Families that elect to pay the tuition balance in installments must utilize a third party provider designated by Casa Montessori School. As of the 2020-2021 school year, Casa uses FACTS to administer its payment plans.

FACTS offers plans which deduct monthly installments on the 15th of each month consistently from all installments. Deductions are made by ACH transaction from a checking or savings account, or by credit card. There is no interest charged for ACH payments. Credit card payments are subject to a 2.85% processing fee for each such transaction.

Families may elect one or several payment schedules, all of which end in April.

Increases Due to Student Move-Up

As of the official move-up date, families of Toddlers and Primary Half Day students will be billed the difference in tuition for the academic year. Families may either pay the balance in full or contact our Book Keeper to add the balance to their FACTS account.

Prorated Tuition

If a student is enrolled or assigned a start date after September 15th, the tuition due is prorated semi-monthly according to the date of entry. Tuition is due in full at the time the student begins school or can be paid in several monthly installments through FACTS. Please consult the Book Keeper for installment options.

Food Allergies

Should your child have a food allergy, an Allergy Action Plan (found in Forms in Transparent Classroom) must be completed and submitted during annual registration or as soon as a food allergy is identified. All parents in the class community will be notified if there are any food restrictions in the classroom.

In the case of a severe allergy, parents must provide records from the child's doctor indicating the severity of the allergy regarding ingestion/contact. The school also requires parents to provide a doctor approved EpiPen, or similar medication, that can be administered by our trained staff members if needed to counteract an anaphylaxis reaction.

Toddler and Primary

In the event your child has an ingested food allergy, an Allergy Action Plan with a doctor's diagnosis is required. This food will be prohibited in the Toddler or Primary classroom.

Severe allergies — those in which the child has a touch allergy in addition to an ingested food allergy — also require a written diagnosis from the child's doctor. **Classrooms in which there is a student with a severe touch allergy will prohibit the food item in the classroom for snack, lunch (for all students), and class celebrations.**

Children ages 18 months to 6 years are not yet of an age to be responsible for their own food choices. This policy is designed to minimize the risk of severe allergic reactions and minimize anxiety on the part of the younger students, their parents, and the staff around the issue of food allergies.

Elementary

Students in Elementary with an ingested food allergy are asked to self-regulate and avoid those items to which they are allergic.

In the event a student has a diagnosed and documented touch allergy with risk of anaphylaxis, the food will be prohibited in the classroom.

Food in the Classrooms

Lunches

Each student should pack a lunch at home and bring it each day. All lunchboxes should be labeled with your child's name. We encourage the use of reusable and recyclable containers. Lunches should be nutritious and well-balanced. A good balance between carbohydrates, protein, and fat is desirable. Processed and packaged foods are discouraged for nutritional and environmental reasons. **Students may not bring candy or carbonated beverages for lunch and sweets/desserts are strongly discouraged.** Thermoses, tin foil, and insulated containers can help keep food warm until lunch time and an ice pack will help items stay cool. In Elementary, check with your child's teacher regarding the use of the microwave for heating lunch items.

It is important to include your Primary and Elementary child in the preparation and clean-up of his/her lunchbox. These actions will extend the Montessori process by allowing him/her to make choices, assume responsibility, and develop independence.

Snacks

Toddler and Primary classrooms have a daily snack available to the children if they are hungry.

Toddler and Primary

Fruits and vegetables are usually prepared by the children and served to their classmates in the morning. The cost for the fruits and vegetables for the school year are included in your annual Activity Fee. This may be suspended or altered due to COVID-19.

Lower & Upper Elementary

Students are asked to bring an individual-sized quick and nutritious snack from home.

Please see Food Allergies section for additional important information.

Fundraising

Casa Montessori School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Tuition alone cannot sustain the growth of the school or support the parent and family services needed. The school, with support of the parent support organization, Parents Club, conducts the Auction and other various fundraising efforts throughout the year to provide the necessities not covered by tuition — the things that maintain Casa Montessori the special learning community it is. Parental participation is key to the success of an independent school. Casa students are not allowed to solicit door-to-door for school funds, per accreditation standards.

Georgia Tax Credit Scholarship Program (Apogee)

Established under House Bill 1133, the Georgia Tax Credit Scholarship Program allows private citizens and businesses the opportunity to redirect a portion of their Georgia income tax liability directly to support the Financial Aid program at Casa Montessori. Contributions to this program are held in a fund managed by Apogee, a Student Scholarship Organization (SSO), to be distributed as financial assistance to qualified incoming applicants. Georgia residents who contribute to the program receive a dollar-for-dollar credit on their state income taxes. The more participants we have in this program, the more Tuition Assistance we can distribute each year. Additional information can be found on our website or by visiting www.Apogee123.org.

The Casa Foundation

The Casa Foundation was established in 2014 in honor of Casa's 40th Anniversary. It is a tax-exempt, non-profit fund that exists for charitable and educational purposes for Casa Montessori School.

The purpose is to raise and administer funds for the benefit of Casa students. It can invest part of its income if desired. Its means of administering funds can be broad: It can award scholarships to qualified students, underwrite out-of-pocket school costs that parents usually have to fund (such as school trips or special materials for a class); it can cover the cost of teachers' continuing education; it can contribute to needed new equipment for the school. This foundation does not in any way replace the generous contributions of the Casa Parents Club, but provides a means for alumni or community members to also assist the school. Casa's Board of Directors will administer this fund.

Head Lice

We will notify parents if head lice are discovered in their child's classroom. Classroom head checks may take place upon reported incidences of head lice. Having lice does not mean that your child is "dirty," in fact lice prefer clean, dry hair. **Should parents**

detect head lice at home, please notify the school immediately. As with any illness, we keep your child and family's information confidential but preventing the further spread of lice is key.

- If a student is found to have lice and/or nits, he/she must be picked up immediately and remain out of school for at least 24 hours. A student may return to school earlier only if a professional de-lousing service has been contracted by the parents and the company has fully treated the student. A treatment document from the company is needed in order for the student to return earlier than 24 hours after being sent home.
- A student may return to school when completely lice and nit free. Upon returning to school, the student must come to the Front Office, accompanied by a parent or guardian, to be examined by an office staff member. Your child must receive a slip from the Front Office stating that he or she is lice and nit free before returning to class.
- A parent may drive for a field trip if there have been no family lice problems for two weeks prior.

The lice eggs (nits) cannot be killed by shampoo or any other treatment. They must be removed from the hair and the home manually. Lice shampoos only kill the live lice. It is the parents' responsibility to make the best decision regarding how to treat their child's head lice and to return the child to school lice and nit free. Consult a pediatrician for further recommendations.

Holiday & Birthday Celebrations

Holidays

In an attempt to celebrate holidays in an age-appropriate way and in keeping with current areas of interest in each class, holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Valentine's Day are celebrated at Casa at the teacher's discretion. The celebration of these holidays is often incorporated into cultural studies in the classroom and may be celebrated differently from year to year and class to class. Additionally, the degree of celebration may change as students mature from one level to the next. Celebrations in the Toddler and Primary classes are often low-key, designed with sensitivity to the young student. Valentine's Day, for example, focuses on the student's expression of love for his or her family members while Elementary students may bring Valentines for their classmates.

Birthdays

Class celebrations vary from level to level and from classroom to classroom and are based on the child's stage of development. Please consult your child's teacher to determine the particular practice for birthday celebrations in that class.

In order to minimize disruptions and avoid the possibility that some students may feel excluded, please do not distribute birthday party invitations or presents at school by sending them to class, giving them to a teacher or assistant, and/or leaving them for pick-up at the Front Office. Class rosters needed for mailing invitations to other families are available.

Illness

Students may not attend school with a fever and/or another contagious symptom such as, but not limited to, a rash, diarrhea, or sore throat. Please note that a fever is defined as a temperature of **100.4 and higher**.

Please reference our COVID-19 amendment for updates to our Illness policy.

Please notify the Front Office if your child contracts any communicable disease.

Notices of possible exposure will be given to all parents in your child's classroom, while maintaining your child and family's confidentiality.

Students will go outside and play on most school days. If you feel that your child should not go outside because he/she is recovering from an illness, please keep your child home an additional day. All students will be included in all class activities unless special instructions are outlined in a student's medical profile and signed by the child's physician.

Inclement Weather & Power Outage

School will be closed due to inclement weather usually in accordance with Cobb County School System. Be sure to check your local radio and television stations before leaving home. If there is a severe warning the morning prior to school opening, **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR HOME**. Casa Montessori School will delay its opening.

Weather band radios are kept in the administrative office and will sound an alert for any weather warning or watch. In the event of severe thunderstorms or tornadoes, please remember that the school has a plan designed for the safety of all students on campus.

Phone calls to the Front Office to check on the status of individual students prohibit the administrative staff and faculty from assuring the safety of all Casa students. Students will NOT be dismissed during tornado warnings.

Please do not call the Front Office during extreme weather conditions. Parents will be notified as soon as possible regarding Early Dismissals due to school closings.

If the weather becomes threatening, you will be notified of Early Dismissals or school closings via SMS text message and email. We also try to post emergency updates to our website: www.casamontessori.com.

If electrical power is out at school due to non-threatening circumstances, school will continue to remain open on days that the outside temperature is warmer than 40°F. In case of colder weather, school will remain closed until power resumes. Alerts to a power outage will be sent via SMS text message and email.

Injuries and Medical Emergencies

Although we provide exceptional supervision, accidents and injuries often cannot be avoided. Minor injuries, bumps, and bruises will be addressed immediately with basic First Aid, Band-Aids, ice packs, etc. An incident report will be filled out and given to you at carpool that day or the next morning. Every attempt will be made to speak with you, or designee, directly at pick-up.

Parents will be called in the event of any injury to a child's head or neck area.

In the case of a medical emergency, Casa will call 911 immediately and will make every effort to contact the parents. In the event that parents cannot be reached, those listed as emergency contacts will be notified. If needed, a member of the faculty or staff will accompany students to the hospital emergency facility nearest the school:

Wellstar Kennestone Hospital
677 Church Street
Marietta, GA 30060

The signed Parental Agreements with Casa Montessori form completed during annual registration will ensure that students receive prompt attention at the hospital or emergency clinic. Parents are expected to pay the charges for medical services rendered.

Insect Repellent

Due to our landscape, mosquitoes can be prevalent on campus in the fall, spring, and summer. While the school does take measures to reduce the nuisance, spraying the students with insect repellent is an added safety measure. As a school, we request permission to apply insect repellent before Elementary students go outside for recess or PE lessons. Permission is granted via the Authorization to Dispense External Medications form during the registration process. We ask that Toddler and Primary parents apply your chosen brand of insect repellent to students before coming to school.

Medication

During the annual registration process, parents are required to complete a Parental Agreements with Casa Montessori form and Authorization for Medication online. If a student does not have a unique medical condition, an electronic signature to that effect is required. If a medical condition is listed on a student's Authorization for Medication form and accompanied by a doctor's order, Casa will administer medication necessary for the student's health and normal functioning.

- All medication must be left with the Front Office.
- All medication must be in its original container with the dosage and child's first and last name listed.
- No medication will be dispensed for longer than two (2) weeks unless it is accompanied by a doctor's note.

Asthma Inhalers and EpiPens

All students who suffer from asthma are required to have the appropriate sections of the Authorization for Medication form completed along with a doctor's signature, indicating directions to be followed. Elementary students can self-medicate as indicated on the Authorization for Medication form. Parents of Primary students can elect to send an inhaler for emergencies and/or for daily use.

All students who suffer from life-threatening allergies are required to have an EpiPen, or similar medication, provided by the parent and kept in the classroom. Students who attend After School Enrichment classes and/or Stay & Play must have a second EpiPen kept in the Stay & Play classroom. A completed Authorization for Medication and a Food Allergy Action Plan (in the case of a food allergy) must also be on file. **EpiPens must remain on campus until the end of the student's last day on campus.** EpiPens

will not be sent home with the student leaving the school for a playdate. Other arrangements for an EpiPen on the playdate must be made by the student's parents.

If a student comes to the Front Office for a minor ache, pain, or reaction, over-the-counter medications such as Ibuprofen and Benadryl are kept on hand and can be administered. The Front Office will call the parents first to discuss the child's ailment and what the parent would like to do to remedy the situation.

Observations

Observations are currently suspended due to COVID-19. When observations can resume: Parents are welcome and highly encouraged to observe their child's classroom during the school year, particularly before each Conference. Observations are typically 30 minutes in duration and usually begin around 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. Observations are scheduled by signing up via the link on our website and begin after your child has been in class for at least six weeks. Please be aware that Casa hosts observers year-round, and advanced scheduling is highly recommended. Teachers will generally only have time to acknowledge you, giving their full attention to the class. Please call or email the teacher if you have follow up questions.

Phasing In and Moving Up

Phasing In

Toddler and Primary "phase in" is the term used in Montessori schools for the initial orientation phase of the new school year. This period of time allows new children to get acquainted with how things work in the classroom. The returning students have a period of time to review the procedures set in place and re-establish their good work habits. These smaller groups allow the teacher to have some special time with new or returning students.

Moving Up

The teachers and administration determine a student's readiness to move to the next level. Class assignments are made only after careful deliberation by the faculty and administration, and are final.

Moving From Toddler to Primary

Sometime between the age of 2½ and 3 years of age, a toddler will become ready to move to the Primary classroom. Many factors determine a student's readiness for the new learning environment:

- Sharing the adult’s attention with more students
- Working cooperatively with other students
- Exhibiting an expanded vocabulary
- Displaying a certain amount of self-control and concentration
- Being independent in the bathroom

Social and emotional maturity are stronger indicators of readiness than academic knowledge. The teacher will notify the parents when she has observed that their child is ready to visit and move into the Primary classroom. Parents are highly encouraged to observe a Primary classroom before their toddler begins to visit.

Toddler and Primary teachers work in conjunction with the Directress to determine the time frame for a student’s transition to the next level as well as the student’s placement.

Please note: If a child moves up to the Primary classroom and enrolls as a “Full Day” child under the age of 4½ , he/she will be offered a nap time after lunch. Children will sleep on approved mats with sheets and blankets. All bedding will be sent home to be washed weekly, as required. Please see our **Safe Sleep Practices Policy (Form 3A)** online for more information.

Moving from Half Day Primary to the Afternoon Session

Between the ages of 4½ and 6 years of age, a Half Day Primary student will become ready to move-up to the afternoon session. Many factors determine a student’s readiness for the extended work session:

- Ability to do concentrated work for a longer day
- Readiness to participate in the advanced group lessons that are frequently given during this time
- Increased self-control and higher level of concentration
- Social maturity
- Academic progress

The teacher will notify the parents when she has observed that the student is ready for the afternoon session. The student is introduced to the extended workday on a gradual basis as a visiting guest, before a firm date of move-up is set. Some students may need a prolonged period of adjustment and others a shorter period before they are ready to attend every afternoon session. **When the change from Half Day to School Day occurs during the school year, there will be an increase in tuition on a prorated basis.**

Moving from Full Day Primary to Lower Elementary

Primary students enter the Elementary level sometime between their sixth (6th) and seventh (7th) birthdays, but must be a **minimum of 6 years of age**. Students move up to Lower Elementary at the start of school in August. There are three factors used as indicators of readiness to begin the transition phase:

- Academic skills
- Social development
- Emotional development

Each factor carries equal weight; all three average into “readiness.” There is an overlap in the academic work between the School Day Primary and Lower Elementary classes. Therefore, a student is not doing “easier” work in his/her Primary class than he/she would be doing in the Lower Elementary class. As the academic indicators of readiness emerge, the social and emotional developmental indicators determine when the student is ready for the Lower Elementary class environment. A student ready for transition to Lower Elementary will exhibit some of the following characteristics of the second plane of development:

- Increased powers of the reasoning mind and imagination emerge as a tool for discovery
- Keen interest in social dynamic, being part of a group, working together
- Questioning, deliberative, even argumentative in pursuing a line of thought
- Sense of justice (fairness) more strongly evident
- Independence, desire for physical and mental challenges

Primary and Elementary teachers work in conjunction with the Directress to determine the time frame for a student’s transition to the next level. Communications regarding move-ups are provided to parents toward the end of the school year, preceding an August start in Lower Elementary. It is highly recommended that parents make an appointment to observe in Lower Elementary well before their child’s move to the Lower Elementary classroom.

Moving from Lower Elementary to Upper Elementary

Students moving from Lower Elementary to Upper Elementary will have an opportunity in the spring to visit the next level. Students advance to this program only at the start of the academic year in August. It is highly recommended that parents observe the Upper Elementary classroom early in their child’s Elementary experience.

Privacy

Casa Montessori School respects the privacy of our families and seeks to protect them from unwanted solicitations from third parties. It is our school policy not to sell or distribute our mailing list to non-Casa groups or organizations. ***School directories and class lists are intended for school communications and Casa family use only and are to be regarded as private documents.*** These lists are not to be given to non-Casa families or groups, or to be used for business, political, or solicitation purposes, even if there is a Casa family affiliation or connection.

Financial Policy

Casa seeks to protect the identity of our families by adhering to strict standards of record-keeping and communications. Sensitive data is protected by lock and key or electronic password where appropriate. Financial information will only be shared with the Directress or accountant. Casa will not attempt to obtain sensitive financial data, including but not limited to bank account numbers, credit card numbers, or social security numbers via email. Any attempt to do so by electronic means should be reported to the Casa Montessori School Directress immediately.

Photography and Videotaping

Casa photographs and videotapes students on campus and at various school events for publications online, in the yearbook possibly, and for external marketing. To protect students' identity and privacy, photographs and videos used in internal and external communications identify students only by their first name or class name unless parental permission is acquired on a case-by-case basis. Parents have the opportunity to decline permission for their child via the annual re-registration process.

Social Media Privacy Policy

Social media is a powerful force, continuing to grow at exponential rates. No longer just the domain of teens, it's a ubiquitous medium that has become a main source of news and information for all schools, enabling them to reach a variety of audiences.

At Casa, we expect this medium to remain professional and to reflect the clear delineation between professional relationships and personal friendships. Online interactions should maintain the principles of respect, dignity, prudence, professionalism and concern for and protection of students and their safety at all

times. Therefore, faculty and teaching staff of Casa may NOT provide unsolicited communications regarding personal interests.

Casa follows the NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) policy of showing students' faces on social media outlets as long as last names are not published with corresponding photos. Parents not wanting their child's photo to appear in social media or any of the school's internal or external articles, advertisements or marketing materials, may opt out during our annual registration.

Programs

Stay & Play

Primary and Elementary students may attend Stay & Play. These programs provide a warm and safe environment for Casa students after regular school hours. These programs incorporate the Montessori philosophy of mutual respect, cooperation, and independence to which the children are accustomed to in their classrooms.

Participation in this program is dependent upon the same level of conduct expected in the classrooms during the school day. Please contact extrahours@casamontessori.com to make reservations or request more information.

Stay & Play hours are **3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**, Monday through Friday, unless otherwise noted. The cost is \$8.00 per half hour. The location is announced annually. Fees are billed monthly. Reservations are imperative to ensure proper staffing.

Occasionally there are All School Half Days (listed on the calendar in advance). Stay & Play will be available for Primary and Elementary students on those days (with the exception of the last day before Holiday Break). If your child is staying through lunchtime at Stay & Play, please make sure to send a lunch with him/her.

After School Enrichment Classes

Special interest classes are offered after school to students ages 5 and up. These lessons vary depending on interest and specialist availability. Enrichment activities in the past have included classes like Art, Spanish, Chorus, Math Club, etc. Enrichment classes typically run in 6-12 week sessions and the cost is set by the specialist.

School Day Enrichment "Specials"

Our Montessori Toddler and Primary programs offer experiences in Art, Music, and physical movement as part of their carefully prepared classrooms. Additional

enrichment classes, commonly referred to as “Specials,” are offered once a week for students ages 6 and up. In the Elementary classrooms, students participate in annual musicals and plays as well.

Summer Camp

Casa Montessori School has offered a week- or two week-long Summer Camp for Primary students in the past depending on parent need and teacher availability. Summer Camp is a great opportunity for new & move-up students to get used to the Casa campus and get a chance to familiarize themselves with the materials in the classroom. Summer Camp usually follows a theme. During camp there is time to play outside, a snack, time to work with the materials and then some added activities related to the camp theme. Summer Camp offerings and details are typically announced in the spring.

Reporting Suspicions of Abuse

Please note that Casa Montessori School is a required reporter of any suspected case of child abuse. Any suspected incidents of abuse will be reported immediately to the Cobb County Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) office.

Georgia law concerning child abuse reporting has requirements for volunteers at schools. The definition below extends the mandatory reporting requirements to **all employees** and **all volunteers** — including parents, coaches, community volunteers, etc. Volunteers are required to report suspected child abuse to the “person in charge of the facility.” Therefore, a report may be made orally, in writing, or by electronic means to the Directress.

Any person making a report or causing a report to be made in good faith “shall in so doing be immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.” O.C.G.A. §19-7-5(f).

Persons **employed or volunteering** at a business or organization, whether public, private, for profit, not for profit, or voluntary, that provides care treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children. O.C.G.A. §19-7-5(b)(5).

Safety Drills

Safety Drills

Casa Montessori School practices various safety drills on campus throughout the school year in order to prepare our school community for these unlikely but potentially dangerous scenarios. Students, teachers, and staff are trained in best practice procedures for each event.

Fire drills and tornado drills are each held several times during the school year. Students are taught safe evacuation and protection procedures by teachers and staff.

Full emergency plans have been developed and are available for parent viewing. The emergency plans include procedures to cover the following:

- Severe Weather/Tornado Shelter in Place
- Fire
- Power Failure
- Loss of Heat
- Loss of Air Conditioning
- Water
- Structural Damage — children will be relocated off the premises

School Attire

Dress should be simple and appropriate. All students have time to play outdoors or participate in physical education each day and should dress accordingly. Please no cowboy boots, jelly shoes, or flip flops at school.

All clothing (including outdoor wear) should be clearly labeled with the student's name.

Many garments are lost each year because students cannot identify them, and the clothing has no name inside. Lost articles are kept in the Lost & Found bin located in the Front Office for a limited time.

Toddler

Clothing is a very important consideration in the Toddler community. Students should be dressed in comfortable two-piece clothing with elastic waist pants/shorts. To aid in toileting, students will be wearing cotton underwear without pants while at school. Students will also change into “inside” shoes upon arrival in the classroom. Parents are asked to provide rubber shoes that fill securely for indoor use. All clothing should be appropriate for the temperature outside as many lessons and activities are conducted outside, year-round.

Toilet Training & Diapering Procedures

Toddler children enrolled in the program will be practicing toilet training. We will work with the child at school and ask that parents reinforce toilet training at home. Children will be taken to the bathroom every two hours or more often as needed. We ask that parents dress children in clothing that is non-restrictive. Belts, restrictive bottoms or overalls are not allowed during this time. Children must wear either pull-ups or underwear. After sitting on the toilet, the child and staff will wash their hands with liquid soap and warm water. Accidents are inevitable at this stage so please provide two (2) seasonally appropriate complete change of clothes in a child's shoe size box labeled with your child's name. Soiled underwear and clothing will not be rinsed but will be double bagged, labeled, and sent home daily. Please send in a replacement change of clothes the following day. Please note: It is the parent's responsibility to provide all pull-ups as needed.

All clothing (including outdoor wear) should be clearly labeled with the student's name. Many garments are lost each year because students cannot identify them, and the clothing has no name inside. Lost articles are kept in the Lost & Found bin located in the Front Office for a limited time.

Primary

Students should wear comfortable clothing in order to participate fully in all classroom and playground activities. With the exception of the Kindergarten year, students should have a complete change of clothing (underwear, socks, dress, or pants and a shirt) kept at school as well as a wet bag. Please send these items in on the first day of school in a child's size shoe box labeled with your child's name. If soiled clothes are sent home in a labeled plastic bag, please send in a fresh set of clothing the following day to replenish the shoe box.

Elementary

Elementary students should wear clean clothing that fits properly and is free of inappropriate graphics or language. Clothing must cover a student's midriff, chest, and undergarments. Shorts must be at fingertip length. In the judgement of a school administrator, if clothing is deemed inappropriate for our professional learning community then the student will be sent home to change.

Trip Attire

For Elementary students who take Field Trips and Going Outs off campus, a specific Casa Montessori School t-shirt and/or hat is required. The cost of your child's t-shirt or hat is covered by the annual Activity Fee. If a student needs a replacement t-shirt or hat mid-year, the cost is \$15. Packing lists will be provided for overnight trips.

Standards of Student Behavior & Discipline

Casa Montessori is a respectful learning community which requires considerate engagement of all community members. Teachers give lessons in Grace and Courtesy and hold class community meetings to create, maintain, and support individual implementation of these values and skills in all aspects of the learning environment. The faculty and staff model polite and courteous behavior, and students are treated with respect and in turn are respectful to others. Students in the community observe the following rules in regard to school life:

- Respect others
- Respect the environment
- Respect oneself
- Respect materials, tools, equipment, and school property
- Display integrity
- Be supportive and inclusive

Grace and Courtesy lessons are given to help students know how to respond to a variety of situations. These are tailored to the developmental level of the student. Normal peer conflict is a part of every student's life experience. As students learn the give-and-take of social interaction and cooperation, conflict naturally occurs. Young students are still learning self-control and developing a sense of personal space.

Here are common steps to re-direct misbehavior:

- The teacher always talks with the child about the problem and encourages self-correction.
- The child may be re-directed to work.
- The child may be asked to sit next to the teacher or alone for a while to work.
- The child will repair minor damage to the environment he/she caused, when possible.
- Misbehavior will be discussed with the Directress and/or the child will be asked to spend time with the Directress in her office.
- If the child's behavior is harmful to self or others, the parent will be called to pick the child up.
- If misbehavior is persistent and/or harmful repeatedly, the parent will be called in to discuss approaches or remediation to correct the problem.
- If all of the above fails, suspension or expulsion may be necessary.

Tutoring

If a student needs extra practice or remedial work, the teacher will first make every possible effort to address the difficulty within the scope of the classroom and school day. If further assistance is necessary, teachers may act as paid tutors outside normal school hours for their own students or the students of other classes, depending on parental request and student need. These are independent arrangements negotiated between the teachers and parents.

Upper Elementary Outplacement

The Directress works collaboratively with the Upper Elementary teacher and parents in support of successful outplacement and matriculation to middle school. Students should notify their teacher regarding the schools to which they will be applying to or plan to attend as early as possible. If transcripts are required, requests can be made through the Front Office. Please allow up to five business days from date of request to process and send all records.

2021-2022 Operating Plans

Overview

Casa Montessori School opened campus for in-person learning in August of 2020 and successfully stayed safe and open for the following two years. We believe our unique campus layout, extensive health & safety operating plans, and conscientious community helped us achieve this success.

To prepare for the 2022-2023 school year, we are continually monitoring the COVID-19 cases and trends in our community and will adjust operations as needed to ensure the safety of our community and comply with local, state, and federal regulations.

This document explains the policies and procedures we are employing to mitigate COVID-related risks at school starting in August 2022.

General Preparedness and Planning

Casa Montessori School has and will continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community. School plans are designed to complement other community mitigation strategies to protect high-risk populations and the healthcare system, and minimize disruption to teaching and learning.

This document was compiled using the COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations for schools and childcare programs published by the [CDC](#), [Governor's Office](#), [GA Department of Public Health](#) and [Cobb & Douglas Department of Public Health](#). Casa's operating procedures will be updated as new information or additional guidelines are made available.

Operating Hours

- Our Front Office operating hours will be from 8:00 AM to 3:15 PM.
- Opening staff will prepare the environment from 7:45 AM to 8:15 AM to ensure protocols were met from the previous day and disinfect common surfaces.
- Closing staff will disinfect classroom environments from 3:10 PM to 3:40 PM.
- Janitors will service the campus after the buildings are empty for the day.

Program Hours

	Drop Off	Program Hours	Pick Up
Toddler (Half Day) Program	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	11:40 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.
Primary (Half Day) Program	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.	11:50 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Toddler (Full Day) Program	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.	2:35 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Primary (Full Day) Program	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.	2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Elementary Program	8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	3:00 - 3:10 p.m.
Stay & Play		3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	

Vaccination

Casa Montessori School strongly recommends all eligible staff members and families to get fully vaccinated against COVID-19. People who are fully vaccinated are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. There is evidence that suggests fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infections or transmit COVID-19 to others.

Training

Staff must be familiar with the local public health and CDC recommendations and requirements. Pre-planning in Summer 2022 will cover all topics in this document and up-to-date recommendations and requirements for the upcoming school year.

Health Screening Before Arrival (At Home)

Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Parents are required to conduct the pre-screening each day at home.

Please do not bring your child to school if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100.4°F or higher
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat

- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea

For the safety of our community, please do not bring your child to school if you have provided him/her a fever reducer within the last 24 hours.

Carpool — Drop Off

- Cars should line up and wait in the VFW lot. Cars may pull up to the Casa lot five minutes prior to arrival time. Once the Casa lot is full, the rest of the cars will line up and wait in the VFW lot.
- Please have child's name/car tag visible. Teachers will open the car door and help the children out of the cars.
- Contactless sign in: Staff members will sign in children for the day by visual identification of the parent.
- When at all possible, the same adult should pick up and drop off the child each day.

Early Departure

Early departure must be scheduled in advance with the teacher and the main office.

Please follow this procedure:

- Notify your child's teacher via email that you will need to pick your child up early.
- Contact the Front Office (info@casamontessori.com, (770) 973-2731) and indicate the approximate time of your child's early departure.
- Office Staff will notify the classroom community to make arrangements for assisting the child with departure at the pre-arranged early departure time.
- At the pre-arranged early departure time, please pull up to the Casa lot and wait.
- Staff will observe the departure area at the pre-arranged early departure time and proceed to assist the child with departure following the regular departure procedures.

Carpool — Pick Up

- Cars should line up and wait in the VFW lot. Cars may pull up to the Casa lot **five minutes prior** to departure time. Once the Casa lot is full, the rest of the cars will line up and wait in the VFW lot.
- Please have child's name/car tag visible. Children will be called to the parking lot and escorted to their car. Teachers will open the car door and help the children into the cars.
- Contactless sign out: Staff members will sign out children for the day by visual identification of the parent.
- When at all possible, the same adult should pick up and drop off the child each day.

Physical Distancing

- We will follow the outlined physical distancing procedures, *when feasible*:
 - Toddler, Primary, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary students will remain in separate classroom environments.
 - Keep children in each classroom and in the smallest grouping possible.
 - Keep the same adults with the group (excluding floaters and substitutes to ensure the safety and supervision of children).
 - Children will be reminded to physically distance (>3 feet) with positive redirection and role play about physical distancing will occur at group/circle times.

Masks

- Masks are optional for all teachers, staff, and parents while indoors on campus.

Healthy Hand Hygiene

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of infections from one person to the next. All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the classroom and after breaks
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- Before and after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth

[Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way](#)

Staff are expected to follow and instruct children to follow these steps:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel.

Notes:

- After assisting children with hand washing, staff should also wash their own hands.
- Upon arrival, children will be required to wash their hands.

- Hand sanitizer will be provided for staff (at level out of reach of children) to use as needed.

Disinfecting

- Common areas will be disinfected with diluted bleach solution or equivalent product (Clorox wipes, Lysol, etc.) two times a day:
 - Front Office bathroom: faucet, toilet handle, sink surface, paper towel dispenser
 - Staff break room
 - Front Office check in area
 - Keypads
 - All door handles (inside and out)
 - Computer and monitor
 - Phone
 - Front Office desks/area (horizontal surfaces)
- Classroom common areas (outdoors included) will be disinfected with diluted bleach solution or equivalent product (Clorox wipes, Lysol, etc.) at opening and at the end of the day:
 - Tables and chairs
 - Shelves
 - Commonly used materials and objects
 - Cubbies
 - Door handles
 - Bathroom sink faucets
 - Toilet handles
 - Paper towel dispensers
 - Commonly used outside toys
 - Grab bars on playground equipment

Notes:

- Materials and toys that cannot be disinfected will not be used.
- Towels, cloths and other porous materials will be single use only and laundered after use.
- Books and other paper materials are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not require disinfection unless mouthed.

Meals and Snack

- Children will bring lunches from home.
- Specific class snack procedures will be communicated at orientation.

- Food preparation (an important part of the Montessori curriculum of practical life) will be modified and procedures will be communicated at orientation.

Illness Policy & Procedures

Our illness policy will be amended to include the following:

- Children will be sent home when the following symptoms are observed:
 - Temperature is 100.4°F or higher (temperature will be taken at least two times, five minutes apart with two separate devices.)
 - Cough (including a persistent dry cough without the documentation from a physician about an allergic condition)
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea

Note: The school reserves the right to send a child home for illness even in the absence of fever and regardless of a note from a physician.

- If any of the symptoms above are observed, the school will:
 - Provide a face covering if not already on (subject to age of child)
 - Remove the child to an isolation area with all belongings to go home and allow the child to lay down
 - Call parent(s) for pickup within 30 minutes. If a parent is unavailable, we will call others on the emergency contact list.
 - If the child was in a classroom, we will open windows to increase air circulation, close off classroom areas used by the child to disinfect items of use (table, chair, etc.).
 - A staff member will wait with the child in the doorway of the isolation room.
 - When a parent arrives, a staff member will bring the child and belongings to the door.
 - A staff member will disinfect the seat/cot/mat bedding of the room and open windows to air out the environment.
- Returning to School:
 - If COVID-19 is suspected, a student can return after
 - At least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**

- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms have improved
- If COVID-19 is not suspected, the child must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school without the use of a fever reducer.

COVID-19 Off Site Exposure — Staff and Children

If an unvaccinated staff member or child has been identified as close contact to someone outside the classroom community who is diagnosed with COVID-19, that staff member or child will be required to quarantine at home until he/she meets all the DPH requirements for persons exposed to COVID-19 found at <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>. Close contact means being closer than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes.

Definitions of Quarantine & Isolation

Quarantine

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

Isolation

Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Classroom Community — Staff and Children

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member in a classroom community, the following actions will be taken by the school:

- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- All follow up actions (quarantine, classroom closure, etc.) will be dictated by the public health department and communicated in a timely manner.

Positive Case of COVID-19 in the Classroom Community — Returning to School

Symptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 can return to school after

- At least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**

- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms have improved

Asymptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 can return to school after at least 5 days have passed since the positive laboratory test **AND** the person remains asymptomatic.

NOTE: Individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, are NOT required to quarantine if it has been at least 14 days since the completion of the COVID-19 vaccination series.

Regardless of vaccination status, individuals should still monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days following a suspected or confirmed exposure. If they develop symptoms of COVID-19, they should be sent home immediately, follow the guidance for symptomatic individuals and seek COVID-19 testing.

Questions? Concerns? Suggestions? Please contact info@casamontessori.com