

# OFMS Operational Policies & Parent Handbook



THE  
**OAK FOREST**  
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

*Oak Forest Montessori School*

2000 Greenleaf Street

Longview, Texas 75605

903-297-0634 phone

903-297-7399 fax

[www.oakforestschool.com](http://www.oakforestschool.com)

[www.facebook.com/oakforestmontessorischool](http://www.facebook.com/oakforestmontessorischool)

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Oak Forest Montessori School where we offer quality, year-round education to children from eight weeks through elementary. We hope that you will find the Parent-Student Handbook useful and assessable. Our intention is to communicate as clearly as possible what we can expect of each other and to eliminate the frustration and disappointment that results when unstated expectations go unmet.

We are committed to providing the best possible service to our children and parents. The Montessori philosophy of education and care fosters and supports the development of the child. This philosophy allows freedom of choice gained through the child's choice of appropriate material and level of participation.

OFMS Objectives:

- To provide developmentally appropriate practices. This includes experiences that meet the needs of the individual child within the environment, providing for the active exploration and self-discovery; such practice, therefore promotes each child's self-esteem and positive attitude toward future learning.
- For children to develop to their fullest potential in all areas: Language creative development, intellectual, social and emotional development.
- Staff will have sensitive, responsive interactions with all children. All children will be treated equally and with sensitivity regardless of their race, religion, gender or special needs.
- Staff work together to provide for a safe, healthy, pleasant and educational environment for children and their families. The team approach allows for a balanced program and continuity of policy implementation.

We promote and invite open communication between parents and the school; this Parent-Student Handbook is part of our effort. We also encourage parents to reinforce at home what the child has learned at school. We welcome you and your children to come grow with us.

Sincerely,

Oak Forest Montessori School Administration

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **SECTION 1- Introduction**

What Can Parents Expect Academically?

What Can Parents Expect From Administration?

Motto

Logo

Philosophy

Mission Statement

Policy of Non-Discrimination

Confidentiality

### **SECTION 2-Enrollment**

Registration and Supply Fees

Re-Enrollment

Tuition

Discount

Referrals

Outstanding Balance

Early Drop Ins

Late Pick Ups

Accounts Receivable Policy

Withdrawal

Dismissal

### **SECTION 3-General Information**

School Hours

Sign In/Out

Morning Carpool

Afternoon Carpool

Carpool Diagram

Why Arrive On Time?

Late Drop Off

Departure

Authorized Pick Ups

### **SECTION 4-Starting School**

Transitions/First Day

Separation Tips for Saying "Goodbye"

### **SECTION 5-Student Life**

Characteristics of the Classroom

Food

Allergies

Snacks

Birthdays

Parties/Celebrations

Animals

Classroom Size, Teacher/Student Ratio, Age of Student

Minimum Standards Rule-Teacher/Student Ratio

Personal Items

Uniforms

OFMS Dress Code

Uniform Sale/Donation

Shoes

Jewelry

What Children Need At School-*Infant, Toddler, PrePrimary, Primary*

Change of Clothes

Nap Time

Lost and Found

Water Activities

Extra-Curricular Activities

Class Placement

School Pictures

Outdoor Play

Transportation

Prayer/Pledge of Allegiance

### **SECTION 6-Attendance**

Attendance and Tardiness

Scheduling Doctor Appointments & Other Appointments

Absences

School Closings

### **SECTION 7-Communication**

Communication

Changes in Child's Information

Parent Participation

OFMS Parent Teacher Organization

Custody Issues

Open Door Policy

Teacher Notes

Calendar

Administration Emails

Newsletter-In a Nutshell

Facebook

Classroom Observations

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Student Take Home Folders

Daily Reports

### **SECTION 8-The Child's Health**

Necessary Health Records

Incident/Accident Reports

Illness

Communicable Disease Reference

What if my child is too sick to go outdoors?

Medication

Emergency Care

Child Abuse/Neglect

Smoking

Emergency Management Plan

Calendar

Safety

### **SECTION 9- Infant/Toddler Program**

Classroom

Curriculum

Meal Time

Nap Schedule

Reports to Parents

Outdoor Time

Daily Activities

Uniforms

Arrival/Departure

Breastfeeding Mothers

### **SECTION 10-Behavior Management**

Introduction

Instructive Discipline

Setting limits

Prevention

Alternatives to Prevention

State of Texas Discipline and Guidance Policy

**SECTION 11-The Purpose of Minimum Standards**

Procedure to Review Minimum Standards and Licensing Inspection

Contacting Minimum Standards and Licensing Office and Child Abuse Reporting

Parent Acknowledgement

## SECTION 1-INTRODUCTION

The Student-Parent Handbook is comprehensive. It is our goal to include information that you find helpful and clear. Please keep this handbook in a place where it can be easily referenced. We reserve the right to periodically update the contents of this handbook.

### What can parents expect of the school academically?

As a Montessori school, we are different from traditional schools. Our first commitment is to the multi-dimensional development of the child. We guide each child to think for their self. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are important, yet they represent only one dimension of our desire for your child. Equally significant is your child's social, emotional, spiritual and physical development.

Children are given choices and freedom, within limits, during the school day. The choices a child makes and the accompanying responsibilities influence the emerging character of your child. Significant emphasis is placed upon community. Younger children learn by serving their small community (school). We treat each child with dignity and respect. **With freedom comes responsibility to their self, to others, and to the community as a whole.**

### What can parents expect from Administration?

In your interactions with administration, you can expect professional, courteous and business-like conduct as well as mutually respectful communication. You can expect integrity; we focus on the needs of the individual child in harmony with the life of the school as a whole; mission-driven decisions embodying good stewardship and responsible management. We have an open door policy and welcome your feedback.

### Motto

Recognize, Respect, Responsibility

### Logo

Our logo is the two hands reaching into the sky for two oak leaves. We chose this because it symbolizes that Oak Forest Montessori School and the materials, tools and guidance that we provide. The hands reaching symbolize the child's learning potential and how there is no limit to what he/she can do.

## Mission Statement

The Oak Forest Montessori School is consistent with the philosophy and mission of Dr. Maria Montessori and her work with children. Our primary goal is to help each child reach their full potential in all areas of life.

## Policy of Non-Discrimination

The Montessori philosophy embraces diversity. Oak Forest Montessori School (hereafter referred to as OFMS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national or ethnic origin, in the administration, hiring, educational policies, and other school administered programs.

## Confidentiality

To ensure the respect and privacy for children, families, and staff in dealing with all areas of running the school, only those required to know for the performance of their duties will have access to confidential information. Staff, substitutes and parents or guardians at OFMS are expected to respect the privacy of each child, family and staff member. All must maintain confidentiality with information that may come to them during the course of the day.

Access to each child's records will only be given to:

- Members of the permanent staff working with that child
- A substitute teacher working with that child, if necessary
- The Head of School, Director(s) and Administrator
- A member of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- The parents or guardians of that child

Information regarding children will be given to the following people only after WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION has been received from the parent of guardian:

- Office of the school where the child is or will subsequently attend
- Specialist working with a child in or outside of the school

No phone caller or any person unknown to the staff is ever told that a particular child is enrolled at the school or whether he/she is at school that day.

Each child's records will be kept for a minimum of three months after the child has left the school. Names, Addresses and Phone Numbers of parents, students or staff will only be given out with permission from the parent or legal guardian.



## **SECTION 2- ENROLLMENT**

### **Registration and Supply Fees**

Registration and Supply Fee is paid annually or semi-annually. Parents may pay in full at the time of enrollment or may break the fees into two payments: **1) the first installment must be turned in with the contract and; 2) the second installment must be paid no later than August 1st.** The annual R/S fee is \$500.00. Students that attend during the fall and spring do not pay a summer supply fee. Summer students that do not attend during the regular school year pay \$100.00 R/S fee which is due at time of enrollment.

***THESE FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE.***

Please keep in mind, if a specific program is full at the time we receive your application your child will be placed on a waiting list and will be admitted as space becomes available.

### **Re-enrollment**

Invitations to continue at OFMS are normally automatic but not guaranteed. Decisions are made by the administration and faculty based on the annual review of the student's progress, social and emotional development along with attitudes and values expressed by parents. As always, our goal is to help each child and family find the perfect match between the student, home and school.

Reenrollment material will be distributed in early spring and due back by the deadline specified along with the applicable registration and supply fees. **Contracts will not be accepted without the first installment of the R/S.** If the school has not received the reenrollment forms and fees by the deadline we will assume the child is not returning and make his/her space available to another child on the waiting list.

### **Tuition**

OFMS is completely reliant on tuition payments as its principal source of income, for that reason our financial stability is dependent upon full receipt of tuition payments. When you withdraw your child for weeks or months our fixed costs do not diminish. Understandably, tuition payments are the basis for running the school as well as funding the cost of salaries, classroom supplies and operating costs.

***Your tuition payment is not subject to a refund and the obligation to pay full tuition will not be cancelled either through absence or withdrawal by parents for any reason.***

## Discounts

- A sibling discount of 10% will be applied towards the tuition of the sibling who is less. A third sibling discount of 15% will be applied to their tuition. Students must be enrolled in the 5 Extended Day program to qualify for this discount.

## Referrals

When you refer a student to OFMS you will receive a credit on your account after they have been enrolled for three months. See Administration for details.

## Outstanding Balance

We do understand that things happen and we are willing to work with parents as best we can. No school records will be released to a family or educational institution with an unresolved account. Unpaid balances will be pursued through the appropriate legal process.

## Early Drop-Ins

Any student who arrives at school prior to 8am, and is not enrolled in the Extended Day program, will be charged a fee. Drop-Ins must be approved in advance by the office 24 hours prior to the early drop off.

## Late Pick Up 12:00, 2:30, 3:00 and/or 6:00pm.

A late fee of \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 per minute will be charged if your child is picked up after their scheduled departure time. These fees are due at the time of the next tuition payment.

## Accounts Receivable Policy

If any family has not met their monthly obligation (plus any other fee or charges incurred) by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month due, a late fee of \$50 will be applied. If by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month following the delinquent month, a zero balance has not been attained, administration has the option to remove the family from the school. All families are required to have a zero balance as of August 1<sup>st</sup> for admittance for the new school year.

In case of personal emergency or hardship, it is the responsibility of the family to notify administration so that alternative payment plans may be determined.

### Withdrawal

A thirty-day written notice is required to withdraw your child otherwise the following month's tuition will be due.

### Dismissal

OFMS reserves the right to discontinue service for any student. These decisions will be made based on the child's ability to succeed in the environment. Furthermore, if the student presents a danger to him/herself, the teacher, or other students or if their needs are out of the range of what OFMS is able to provide, we reserve the right to ask the family to make alternative arrangements.

## **SECTION 3-GENERAL INFORMATION**

### School Hours

Monday-Friday 7:00am-6:00pm

**\*\*\*Academic day begins promptly at 8:15am\*\*\***

Program	Earliest Drop Off	Latest Pick Up
Preschool/Primary Morning Only	8:00am	12:00pm
Preschool/Primary Full Day	8:00am	3:00pm
Kindergarten Full Day	8:00am	2:30pm
ALL Extended Day	7:00am	6:00pm

### Sign In/Out

OFMS requires that all students are signed in/out daily. Your child/children must be signed in before they enter the classroom and signed out before they are picked up. These records remain part of the student's permanent file records.

### Morning Carpool

OFMS offers carpool service to all of our students except for our infant program, please utilize this service. Morning carpool is from 7:00am to 8:15am. Be certain that you pull up into the first position whenever possible to allow for the unloading of two cars at once. Never allow a child to exit the car without the assistance of the teacher during carpool.

All children will be greeted at the car by one of the staff members and escorted inside the building. Through years of experience, we have found that the students do much better leaving parents at the car rather than having the parents leave them at the classroom door. It is difficult to break the habit of walking your child into the building and to the classroom. Walking students to the room only delays the moment of separation, and it is usually more difficult on both the child and the parent. Leaving your vehicle in the drive to walk a student in also creates traffic problems for others.

### Afternoon Carpool

Our carpool for Morning only students is from 11:45am to Noon and carpool for Kindergarten students is from 2:30pm to 2:35pm.

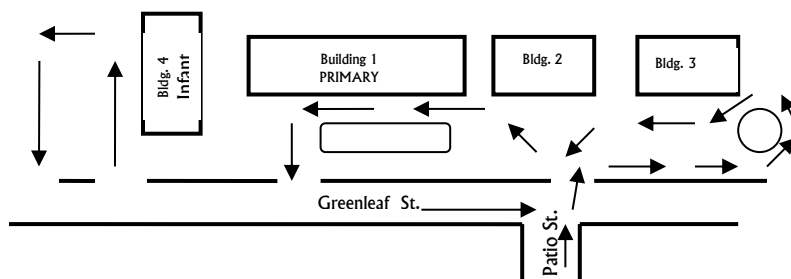
Again, please be certain that you pull up to the first position to help prevent congestion, put your car in park and turn off the ignition. Teachers bring the child out and the parent places the student in the car/car seat and buckle them safely.

Students not picked up in a timely manner will return to class and a fee will be charged.

Our primary concern is the safety of our students. Please exercise extreme caution when entering and exiting our parking lot to ensure the safety of our children. Children should never be left unattended in a vehicle or the parking lot. Do not allow children to walk between or in front of cars. All children not participating in carpool must be accompanied by an adult at the time of sign in and sign out.

The diagram on the next page will enable us to maintain a smooth flow of traffic during times for loading and unloading. Please be careful not to block the entrance and exit to the school.

If it is necessary for you to come in, please park in the parking lot so that the carpool line will not be blocked.



## Why Arrive on Time?

The Oak Forest Montessori School is neither a baby-sitting service nor a play school. Rather, it is a unique cycle of learning designed to take advantage of the child's sensitive years between the ages of 8 weeks through kindergarten when they can absorb information from an enriched environment.

We cannot stress enough the importance of children arriving on time, as the beginning of the day sets the tone for the classroom. We ask for your cooperation in ensuring that your child has the opportunity to begin his/her work at the start of the class.

**Please have your children at school no later than 8:15 am. Constant interruptions are unfair to the classroom and the students working.**

## Late Drop Off

All children should arrive by 8:15 a.m. each day. After 8:15 a.m. it will be necessary for you to park and come in with your child.

Parents of students enrolled in the Pre Primary (18months-3yrs) program should go to Building One and sign in with the office. After doing so, parents may proceed to Building 3 (Rooms 900-1400) or 4 (1900) where they will be met at the door by their child's teacher.

Parents of students enrolled in the Primary program (Rooms 200,300,400,500) should not enter the classroom or disturb the teachers or class once the day has begun. Once classes have started, parents should sign the child in and then allow students to independently walk to his/her class. This policy minimizes the effect on both your child and the rest of the students in the classroom.

## Departure

Departure time for Morning Only students is from 11:45 to noon. Departure time for Kindergarten Full Day students is 2:30-2:35pm. The latest departure time for Extended Day students is 6:00pm. Parents of Extended Day students go to the classroom to get their children. All students will be released to parents and/or designee with proper identification. A sign-out/check-off system is used.

## Authorized Pick Ups

Any person(s) who is not on the child's authorized pick up list must check in with the office and provide his/her driver's license to be photocopied. Parents must contact the

office BEFORE noon letting the administration know a person not on the pick-up list will be coming.

## **SECTION 4- STARTING SCHOOL**

### Transitions/First Day

Many young children and their parents feel a bit nervous when they leave one another in an unfamiliar situation. Both the child and the parent may shed a few tears and this is to be expected. To ease any anxieties, we suggest you do the following:

- Drive by OFMS and point out his/her new school;
- Bring your child to the school to familiarize them with their new environment;
- Reassure your child by talking with them about their new school, all the new friends they will meet and all the fun things they will learn.

Prior to the first full day of school we require children to participate in 3 transitions.

Permitting, the first transition should be scheduled at 8:30am. The parent and child spend 30 minutes in the environment. Doing so allows the child to meet his/her new teachers and friends and see the classroom while having the security of mom or dad's company. We know attending school is exciting for the entire family; however, we ask that siblings refrain from attending transitions and respectfully request that only one parent attend the first transition. Doing so limits distractions for your child and his/her classmates.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> transition day the child should arrive before 8:15am and should go through carpool. We ask that parents leave the child for two hours and then come to pick him/her up.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> transition day is the same as the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

On the transition days and first day of school, we ask parents to go through carpool. If you must walk your child in, we ask you to not to linger too long or react with alarm if your child shows hesitation about separating from you; this reaction is very normal. It is important that parents reassure their child where they will be while the child is in school, when they will be picked up, and by whom. Some children may be sad for a little while during the first few days of school, but kind words and reassurance almost always alleviate their fears. Our teachers are wonderful at helping children through these situations, which typically subside within the first few days.

### Separation Tips for Saying “Good Bye”

Initially it can be difficult for parents and young children to say good-bye. We have found that a short and positive good-bye is easiest for the child. We encourage parents to utilize our carpool system. If you must park and come in, we do not recommend parents escorting their child into the classroom. This minimizes the distractions in the classroom environment. A prolonged good-bye only makes the separation more difficult and leaves the child feeling uneasy when the parent shows reluctance in leaving. **Feel free to call the office for reassurance that your child has settled in and is adjusting well.**

## **SECTION 5 – STUDENT LIFE**

### Characteristics of the Classroom

There is always a busy hum of activity in the classroom. All activity, however, is guided by a respect for the teacher, a respect of the work of others, and a respect for the materials themselves.

The classroom offers the child the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of graded materials. Having children of mixed age groups provides the younger children with a graded series of models for imitation, and the older students an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge by helping the younger ones. Older students develop leadership skills during this time.

The teacher is a very keen observer of the individual interests and needs of each student. She demonstrates the correct use of materials as they are individually chosen by the students. She notes the progress of each child and keeps a record of his/her work with the material. She is trained to recognize periods of readiness.

Because the students work individually with the materials, there is no competition in the classroom. Each student relates only to their own previous work, and their progress is not compared to the achievements of other students. We feel that competition in education should be introduced only after the student has gained use of the basic skills. This competition usually begins to develop with the student in the first grade. The use of individual materials permits a varied pace that accommodates many levels of ability in the classroom. Pre Primary children mature at very different rates and their periods of readiness for academic subjects vary a great deal. We believe that learning experiences should occur naturally and joyfully at the proper moments for each individual student.

## Food

Meal times are a social experience and an opportunity to refine manners. It is a time to enjoy pleasant conversation and food. The children's work at school is directly affected by the nutritional quality of their meals. Teaching our children the importance of good eating habits while they are very young will benefit them for the rest of their lives. OFMS provides a morning and afternoon snack. Parents provide a lunch.

Students must bring their lunch in a clearly labeled container and the proper utensils. Please be sure and label all containers, utensils, etc. as they can easily be lost or misplaced in a group setting. Parents are asked to send nutritional food in proportions that are appropriate for their child. If food is in the proper containers we will return any uneaten food so you will know how much your child has eaten. Please do not send any food or soft drinks containing sugar such as soda, candy, or gum. Always include a cold pack to ensure freshness. We are able to microwave meals but please limit what you send to foods that can be heated in a minute or less. Utensils must be sent each day for your child to use during lunch.

**\*The Oak Forest Montessori School is not responsible for the nutritional content of student lunches.\***

## Allergies

Any food allergies must be listed on your child's enrollment form. Any and all changes regarding food or allergy restrictions must be put in writing. Administration will post and distribute the information so that all staff members have access to it.

## Snacks

OFMS provides one daily snack for morning only students and two snacks daily to all children enrolled in the extended day. A list of snacks served is posted on the school bulletin board for parents to review.

## Birthdays

Children love to celebrate their birthdays with friends. The Celebration of Life is a special ceremony in which we tell the class the story of the birth and life of a child at OFMS. Parents may send pictures or children may make a poster timeline at home of their lives to date with pictures representing each year of life. This will be on display in the classroom during their birthday week.



## Parties/Celebrations

Class parties/celebrations are held for the following occasions: Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Primary and Kindergarten students celebrate Thanksgiving with a Thanksgiving Feast. Parents may wish to provide a healthy refreshment or snack for these special events. A parent volunteer will contact you when help is needed.

The Spring Program is a yearly "event" which gives the OFMS kindergarten class the opportunity to participate in a planned, scheduled performance. Be sure to plan to attend. The Spring Program is held in May. Please check your school calendar for the specific date.

## Animals

Classroom pets are at the discretion of the teachers. If your child has an allergy to pet dander, etc. please indicate on your enrollment papers. If pets are on campus they must be vaccinated, etc. as required by licensing.

## Classroom Size, Teacher to Student Ratio and Age of Students-Morning Classes

Infant (1500/1600)- In our infant community the children range from approximately 8 weeks thru 12 months. There will be no more than 10 infants in this community. The student to teacher ratio varies depending on the makeup of the classroom.

Toddler (1700)-In our toddler community the children range from 12 months to 18 months. There will be no more than 12 students in this environment. The student to teacher ratio varies depending on the makeup of the classroom.

PrePrimary (900/1000)-In these classrooms the children are typically older two year olds to three year olds and some three and half year olds. The student to teacher ratio varies depending on the makeup of the classroom.

PrePrimary (1100/1200)-In these classrooms the children are typically early two year olds to late two year olds. The student teacher ratio varies depending on the makeup of the classroom.

PrePrimary (1300/1400)- In these classrooms the children are typically eighteen months to two years old. The student teacher ratio varies depending on the makeup of the classroom.

PrePrimary (1900)- In this classroom the children are typically three to four years old. This classroom serves as a transition classroom when children are moving from the

preprimary program to the primary program. The student teacher ratio varies depending on the makeup of the classroom.

Primary (200-500)- In these classrooms the children are required to be potty-trained and range from three to six years old. The student teacher ratio varies depending on the makeup of the classroom.

**The chart below indicates student to teacher ratios when the school is operating a maximum capacity. The makeup of the age of children in each classroom is always a determining factor when evaluating enrollment.**

Classroom	Children	Teachers
Infant (1500/1600)	3	1
Toddler (1700)	4	1
PrePrimary (900/1000)	7	1
PrePrimary (1100/1200)	7	1
PrePrimary (1300/1400)	5	1
PrePrimary (1900)	9	1
Primary (200-500)	13	1

Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers

A frequent question time and again relates to classroom size and teacher student ratio. Therefore, we have copied and pasted a section from the Minimum Standards.

**Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers Child/Caregiver Ratios and Group Sizes Classroom Ratios and Group Sizes for Centers Licensed To Care for 13 or More Children How many children may one caregiver supervise?**

*Subchapter E, Child/Caregiver Ratios and Group Sizes  
Division 2, Classroom Ratios and Group Sizes for Centers Licensed to Care for 13 or More Children  
Children*

Medium-High-The classroom ratio is the number of children one caregiver may supervise and is shown in the following chart. The classroom ratio is based on the specified age of the children in the group, unless otherwise stated in this subchapter:	Then the maximum number of children <u>one caregiver</u> may supervise is....
--	---

If the specified age of the children in group is...	
0-11 months	4
12-17 months	5
18-23 months	9
2 years	11
3 years	15
4 years	18
5 years	22
6-8 years	26
9-13 years	26

### Personal Items

Unless specifically requested by the teacher, toys may not be brought to school. On the off chance that a toy is brought into the classroom environment, it will be placed in the office until the end of the day. Parents may pick these items up when they pick up their child.

### Uniforms

The Montessori classroom is a prepared environment. The materials, furniture, the minimal pictures and posters, the books and music have all been selected to create a space, which is conducive to concentration, higher level thinking and creative expression. The clothing worn by the children becomes part of the environment and can have an effect on the children.

Just as we would not hang posters on the wall of popular movies, TV or video themes, we ask that you reserve shoes or clothing with such depictions for use outside of the school. OFMS students wear uniforms. Our school colors are Navy Blue, Red, Hunter Green and White.

### The Oak Forest Montessori School Dress Code

Please dress your child according to the rules listed below. If your child takes a nap, please also see the section at the end about nap things.

1. **All students 18 months and older are required to wear uniforms.** Uniforms may be ordered online at [www.frenchtoast.com](http://www.frenchtoast.com) or purchased from the OFMS

office. If purchased from an outside vendor, we ask that they do not have any other logo or decorations.

2. Uniforms for girls:

- Polo style shirts in navy, dark green, red or white (long or short sleeved). All shirts must be embroidered the OFMS logo.
- Shorts, pants, skorts, skirts and capri's in khaki or navy blue are to be worn but **without decoration.**
- Plaid, navy or khaki jumpers may also be worn. They may be purchased from OFMS and have the OFMS logo on them.
- White peter pan collared shirts may be worn under jumpers or with other acceptable pants, skirts etc.
- Shorts must be worn under all skirts and jumpers.
- OFMS T-shirt may be worn on Monday's only, except during the summer semester.
- OFMS T-shirts may be worn any day during the summer term.
- OFMS sweatshirts may be worn on cool days as a jacket over the appropriate school shirt.
- Tennis shoes are to be worn.

3. Uniforms for boys:

- Polo style shirts in navy, dark green, red or white (long or short sleeved). All shirts must be embroidered with the OFMS logo.
- Shorts or pants in khaki or navy blue are to be worn but **without decoration.**
- OFMS T-shirt may be worn on Monday's only, except during the summer semester.
- OFMS T-shirts may be worn any day during the summer term.
- OFMS sweatshirts may be worn on cool days as a jacket over the appropriate school shirt.
- Tennis shoes are to be worn.

4. General information regarding uniforms:

- Clothing
  - Blue jeans, denim shorts or denim skirts of any kind are not allowed.
  - If your child is potty training, please have your child wear clothing that has an elasticized waist. We are developing independence and clothing must be easy for the child to pull down and up.
  - After your child is fully potty trained, please continue to buy clothing that is easy to pull down and up so independence is continued.

- Miscellaneous
  - Temporary “tattoos” are not to be worn to school.
  - Backpacks are too large for the bins and must be left at home. On a day when a child needs to bring an extra bag for dance or gym, keep in mind that the bag must be small enough to fit in their bin.
  - Students will have outdoor playtime each day as the weather permits, so please consider this when selecting clothes for each day. All outer garments such as sweaters, jackets, caps, and gloves should be clearly marked with the child’s name.
  - All children, regardless of age, should have a complete change of clothing at school. Please send the following, labeled with your child’s name, to leave in their bin: underwear, pants, shirt, socks and shoes. This supply should be maintained to insure your child always has a change of clothes on hand appropriate for the season. For children in Building # 3, two changes of clothing are necessary.

### Uniforms Sale/Donation

The Oak Forest Montessori School offers a limited onsite uniform store for your convenience. The store is open from 8:00am to 6:00pm Monday-Friday. Price Lists are posted throughout the store. Once parents make their selections they need to check out with the office. Checks are made payable to **The Oak Forest Montessori School (OFMS)**. Parents may also purchase uniforms at [www.frenchtoast.com](http://www.frenchtoast.com). A school code will be provided to you.

Clothing and shoes your children have outgrown are always welcome. We will use them when children do not have spare clothing in their bins.

### Shoes

OFMS students must wear tennis shoes to ensure their safety. A list of shoes NOT permitted is provided below. These shoes hinder the child’s participation in running and climbing activities that are important for their fitness and/or are a distraction in the class room.

- ALL boots
- Sandals
- Flip flops
- Light up shoes
- Shoes that make noise (jingle, etc.)
- Crocks

- Character shoes
- Shoes with exposed heels or toes.

### Jewelry

Students should not wear bracelets, necklaces or any type of watches. If your child's ears are pierced, then they may wear stud earrings only.

### What Children Need at School

#### Infants/Toddlers:

- Ample supply of diapers
- Diaper cream and/or baby powder (if used)- Must have medicine authorization form on file
- At least 3 changes of clothing (including socks)
- Extra formula, baby food and infant snacks
- A blanket-toddlers only
- Extra pacifiers and/or bottles
- Pictures of your family

#### PrePrimary

- Ample supply of diapers and/or pull ups
- Diaper cream and/or baby powder (if used)-Must have medicine authorization form on file
- At least 2 changes of clothing labeled and in gallon zip lock bag(including socks and shoes)
- A crib sheet and blanket

#### Primary

- At least 2 changes of clothing labeled and in gallon zip lock bag(including socks and shoes)
- A crib sheet and blanket (if a napper)

### Change of Clothes

While accidents do happen, they are sometimes embarrassing to the child. We want to minimize the effect this has on the child. As a result, we ask that all changes of clothing be up to uniform code as well. All clothing should be labeled

## Nap Time

**Children who are under the age of 5 are required by Texas State Law to have a “rest period”.** Although we realize that children do not all require the same amount of sleep, the school policy stipulates that all children, whether a napper or non-napper rest for a minimum of 30 minutes. Children who nap are required to bring a crib sheet and blanket, only. Nap things will be sent home for washing each Friday and should be returned the following Monday. Dolls, stuffed animals and pacifiers are to be left at home (infant excluded). The school will provide vinyl rest mats for children who take naps and for non-nappers to use during their rest period.

## Lost and Found

All items lost will be kept in a “lost and found” bin in the office for one month. Unclaimed items will be placed in the school’s community clothing or donated to charity.

## Water Activities

On the OFMS Enrollment Agreement, parents have the opportunity to choose if their child participates in water activities. Our water activities include water sprinklers and play with water tables. Parents may deny permission for their child to participate in any water activity. At OFMS we have water-play days only during summer school, weather permitting. Administration will communicate with parents regarding the summer schedule and the days when water activities are offered. Children are required to wear swimming suits under their clothing. Parents are asked to apply sun block BEFORE dropping their child off. Children will be responsible for bringing a towel, water shoes and a complete change of clothing including underwear; please make sure everything is properly labeled.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

We do have on-site activities such as TOTs, Soccer Shots, Kindermusik, Gymnastics, Dance and Swimming. Dates and times of classes vary. Please see the office for details.

## Class Placement

Our goal is to place each child in a class that will provide the best learning environment. The Director, in consultation with the Head of School and teachers, decide a student’s placement. Placement decisions can be complex involving many factors relative to balancing class size, gender, ages, and maintaining close social relationships when appropriate. Because of the complexity of this process, teachers do not recommend

placements to parents and parents are discouraged from asking teachers for specific placements. Parents are encouraged to write letters to Administration outlining concerns for their child's needs and every effort will be made to accommodate the request.

### School Pictures

Individual pictures of the children will be taken twice a year (spring and fall) along with a group picture of each class. Notice will be given prior to the day pictures are taken and at the time they are available. In the enrollment agreement there is a place for photo authorizations. If parents are interested in granting the school permission to take pictures of their child through the year they should indicate this in the provided blank. No photos will be used for advertising purposes without the prior consent of the parents.

### Outdoor Play

Maintaining compliance with minimum standards for the state of Texas, students will have outdoor play in the morning and outdoor play in the afternoon, weather permitting. On inclement weather days, students will engage in physical activities inside the classroom as a substitute for outdoor play. During warmer months sunscreen should be applied BEFORE coming to school.

### Transportation

Kindergarten and After School students are the only children that ride in school vehicles. OFMS plans and organizes field trips for our Kindergarten students and offers after school pick up for Pine Tree and Spring Hill students. In the event of an emergency, OFMS will transport your child ONLY if you have given authorization on the enrollment agreement.

During the summer months OFMS partners with Parke Way Fitness Center for swimming lessons. These lessons are only offered to students in the primary program and above. Enrolled swimmers that meet state height requirements will be transported to Parke Way Fitness Center. Parents that choose to transport their child to Parke Way must also transport them to OFMS after the lesson is complete.

### Prayer/Pledge of Allegiance

OFMS students say a prayer and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. If parents prefer for their child not to participate in prayer and/or the Pledge of Allegiance please notify the



administration and we will gladly accommodate. OFMS is not affiliated with any one religion and encourages the study and respect of all beliefs.

The Prayer recited in the classroom is as follows: *“God is great, God is good. Let us thank Him for our food. Amen.”*

## **SECTION 6- ATTENDANCE**

### **Attendance and Tardiness**

All OFMS students, even our youngest, are expected to attend school as scheduled. Nothing is more disruptive to a child’s education than irregular attendance. Consistency and routine are important to every child’s development, but especially toddler and preprimary students who may experience anxiety. Understandably, late arrivals can be extremely disruptive and inconsiderate to the class and the teacher.

Classes begin promptly at 8:15am. The Montessori philosophy emphasizes the importance of uninterrupted hours of work time. As such, children arriving after the start of the class are disruptive to the classroom environment and deprived of valuable learning time and lessons. In the event your child arrives late, please bring your child to the front office and check them in. Toddler and Pre Primary students will be met at the door to Buildings 4 and 3, respectively, and Primary students should independently walk to their classrooms.

### **Scheduling Doctor Appointments & Other Appointments**

We understand that sometimes, appointments arise that require your child to be absent from school. If your child has a doctor’s appointment or other appointment, we ask that you try to schedule it first thing in the morning so the child will be able to attend as much of the school day as possible. If the appointment is scheduled in the afternoon, we ask that the child return to school the following day. Bringing a child back after an afternoon appointment is confusing to the child. This also disrupts the daily routine and may disrupt the routine of the classroom.

### **Absences**

Regular school attendance is extremely important. Although our Montessori programs are individualized, a child’s success is contingent upon consistency and continuous progress. Every time a child misses school for whatever reason, there is a period of readjustment while the child gets back into their work routine. The longer the absence, the more detrimental it becomes to their educational development. If for any reason, a student will not be attending a regular school day, parents should report the absence by

9:00am to the office 903-297-0634. **We love your children and worry when they are absent.**

***No refunds will be given for absences due to illness, vacation or school closings.***

### School Closures

If severe weather conditions make travel hazardous, school may be postponed, closed early or canceled. OFMS follows the guidelines of Longview Independent School District for weather related school closings.

## **SECTION 7- COMMUNICATION**

### Communication

Communication is the primary medium of interaction between the school and parents, faculty/staff, and other members of the school community. Good communication is key to a successful school-family relationship.

The administration manages all aspects of internal and external communications for OFMS and has responsibilities that include:

- Oversight of all publications including newsletters and invitations, marketing materials.
- Maintenance of the school's database and confidential records
- Monitoring and updating of the school's website: [www.oakforestschool.com](http://www.oakforestschool.com)
- Monitoring and updating the school's Facebook and other social media.

Communication between OFMS Administration and OFMS Parents comes in many forms. In order to keep abreast of current school information, we encourage all parents and staff members to be sure and check your student take home folders, bulletin boards and Facebook daily.

Questions, concerns, or suggestions pertaining to the school's forms of communication should be directed to Administration 903-297-0634.

### Changes in Pertinent Information

As part of the enrollment process, all parents/legal guardians are required to furnish information about their child and others who are authorized to make decisions on their behalf. Please be sure to notify the office, IN WRITING, of any changes that may occur during the course of the school year. These changes include: marital status, address,

cell or home phone numbers, email, employer, contact names, child's living arrangements, and child's health records including: newly administered immunizations, vision/hearing test results, professional evaluation results/recommendations, allergies, authorized emergency contacts and authorized persons allowed to pick up your child.

### Parent Participation

Parents and family members are encouraged to become involved with the activities of the school. We recognize these choices are individual and based on the family's circumstances and needs. Below are opportunities for our families to become involved with the OFMS community.

- Volunteer with the Parent Teacher Organization
- Volunteer to read with the students
- Parent Education Meetings

### OFMS Parents Teacher Organization

The OFMS Parents Teacher Organization is organized for the purpose of supporting the education of children at the Oak Forest Montessori School by fostering relationships among school administrators, parents and teachers. Students benefit best from cooperative, consistent partnership between home and school. OFMS PTO invites all parents and staff to become active members.

### Custody Issues

The school will require a copy of court mandated custody agreement in the event custody for a child's parent or legal guardian is modified or restricted.

### Open Door Policy

All parents are welcome to observe their child through the classroom doors during business hours. We ask that parents schedule observations with Administration in advance and limit them to 20 minutes. Open communication between staff members and parents is essential. If, at any time, questions or concerns arise, we urge parents to bring these to the attention of the classroom teacher and the administrative staff. All parties will do their best to find appropriate resolution to the situation in the timeliest manner possible.

### Teacher Notes

Our teachers are in the classroom engaging with your children, they are not in front of a computer checking email. If you wish to communicate with a member of the school

staff, please send an email to administration or a note. If you choose to write the teacher a note a member of our administrative team will deliver your request by 10am. PLEASE DO NOT SEND NOTES IN LUNCHBOXES, ETC. Any communication requiring a follow up will receive a response within a 24 hour period if the staff member is in attendance the day the note is received. Please refrain from contacting your child's teacher at home to discuss school business. Requests for conferences should be made through administration. When making a request for a meeting with a faculty member, please include the reason for the meeting, a requested time and a contact number. We will do our best to schedule a time that works for everyone. Again, we want to hear from you.

**For the safety of the classroom as well as respect for the children, we DO NOT permit parents to interrupt a class to conference with a teacher before, after, or during drop off.**

#### Administration Emails

Parents should feel free to use this method to communicate with administration. Under most circumstances you should expect to receive a response to your email by the end of the next school day. It is helpful if you indicate the kind of response you are expecting, i.e. an answer to a question, confirmation that you have received information, finding time to have a meeting, etc. If it is a pressing matter or several days have gone by without a response, please follow up with a telephone message. Occasionally emails do not reach their intended recipients. It is important for staff and parents to remember that there is no expectation of privacy in OFMS's mail system. Any email sent or received in our system can be retrieved through the email server and viewed by technology support and/or administration. In addition, please be aware that all emails regarding a student become part of a student's record. Parents that do not have a computer or prefer to call are welcome to! Again, we want to hear from you.

#### Emails:

Beth Carter, Director: [director@oakforestschool.com](mailto:director@oakforestschool.com)

Amy Gaddy, Administrator/Owner: [ald269@aol.com](mailto:ald269@aol.com); [adirector@oakforestschool.com](mailto:adirector@oakforestschool.com)

Louise Dyer, Head of School: [ofmontessori@aol.com](mailto:ofmontessori@aol.com)

### Newsletter

In a Nutshell is distributed monthly to all parents. The newsletter is an excellent way to stay abreast of upcoming events, activities taking place on campus, reminders, parent participation opportunities, etc.

### Facebook

Facebook is another way for us to engage and communicate as a community. This social network provides an excellent opportunity to connect with families and share information rapidly. [www.facebook.com/oakforestmontessorischool](http://www.facebook.com/oakforestmontessorischool)

### Classroom Observations

Parents are free to schedule a time to observe the students working in the classroom. We ask that you do so from our observation windows. As you can imagine, as soon as parents are spotted the classroom is disrupted and does not function as it normally would.

### Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences occur once in the fall and once in the spring. As there are no written evaluations or report cards sent home, it is important to discuss your child's progress AT LEAST twice per year. Teachers do maintain permanent student work reports that become part of your child's file. Parents are free to arrange a conference outside of these two dates at any time during the year.

### Student Take Home Folders

Be sure and check your child's folder daily. Newsletters, tuition statements and receipts, birthday invitations and notes from administration/ teachers may be in the folder.

### Daily Reports

Parents of Infants will complete a monthly "All About Me" report. This report should be updated monthly. Parents of Infants and toddlers will receive a daily report including what the child ate, how long he/she slept, the child's disposition, how often they are changed and any other pertinent information.

## **SECTION 8- THE CHILD'S HEALTH**

### **Necessary Records**

Students will not be able to attend school until we have all of the necessary forms on file, including:

- Enrollment Agreement
- Signed Contract
- Hearing and Vision
- Immunization Record including Physician's Statement of Health
- Signed Parent Handbook Return Form
- Copy of Driver's License

These records will ensure that we have all of the information necessary to handle any emergencies involving your child expeditiously. Please be sure these forms are updated at all times, especially with phone numbers where parents can be reached.

### **Incident/Accident Reports**

In the event that your child is seriously hurt at school you will be immediately contacted at the numbers provided on your enrollment agreement. If your child sustains a minor injury at school, we will administer first aid and prepare an accident/incident report with detailed information of the injury and care given. If the accident/incident involves a bump to the head, we will administer first aid, prepare an accident/incident report and give you a phone call to inform you of the incident. As required in the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Minimum Standards, severe injuries that require medical attention must be reported to TDFPS licensing. This report results in an investigation of the accident and an interview of all involved, including the child. We cannot prevent the state from interviewing your child but we will notify you that this will occur.

### **Illnesses**

In order to maintain the healthiest environment possible for all children at OFMS, we ask that children who are feverish or not feeling well be kept at home for the day. If the child develops symptoms of illness while at school, parents will be notified and asked to pick their child up. Circumstances that require a child to be removed from the classroom are as follows:

- Symptoms preventing comfortable participation in activities

- Symptoms requiring a greater need for care than staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.

If the child has any of the following:

- Oral temperature 100.4 degrees or greater, armpit temperature 99.4 degrees or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, diarrhea, vomiting, rash with fever, wheezing or behavioral changes
- The child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. Any child who has had a communicable disease needs a health professional's note of health to return to school.

Children sent home exhibiting such symptoms must be symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours prior to returning to school. We reserve the right to require that your child be picked up if he/she is unable to function in the classroom setting due to illness or injury, out of respect for your child and classmates.

### Communicable Disease Reference

The following diseases require a signed note from a health care worker before your child may return to class:

Chickenpox (varicella)	Mumps
Coxsackie virus disease (Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease)	Pertussis (whooping cough)
Escherichia coli (E Coli)	Ringworm (body or scalp)
Fifth Disease (erythema infectiosum)	Rubella
Hepatitis A	Salmonellosis
Hepatitis B	Scabies
Influenza (Flu)	Shigellosis
Measles	Streptococcal sore throat (Strep)
Meningitis (bacterial or viral)	Scarlet fever
Mononucleosis	Tuberculosis

### What if my child is too sick to go outdoors?

If your child is too sick to play outdoors, they are too sick to come to school. While we would love to work with you, we cannot always accommodate requests for children to

stay indoors. For the safety of the children, all adults in the environment go outside to supervise therefore there is no one available to watch children who remain in the classroom.

Administratively, it is extremely difficult for a child to remain in the office while their class participates in outdoor time. With a child in the office, administration cannot do their job and meet the needs of the entire OFMS community. In the event of an emergency it would be difficult for us to respond if a child is in the office. Please contact the office with questions, concerns and/or special circumstances.

### Medication

If your child requires prescription/non prescription medication that must be administered during school hours, a medicine authorization form must be filled out in the office. DO NOT send medicine in a child's lunch box. All medicine must be delivered to the school office in its original container, labeled with the child's name, a date, and dosage instructions for administration, the physician's name and pharmacy name. All medicine is kept in the kitchen of each building. Medication will not be administered without written authorization from a parent. The school will administer the medication only as stated on the label instructions, or as amended in writing by the child's physician. A medication that is labeled for dosage twice per need should not be given at school.

### Emergency Care

All of our staff is trained in basic first aid and CPR. In the event of a life threatening accident, the staff will call 911 and render aid as is appropriate. Parents will be notified as soon as 911 have been notified. In the event any medical situation arises that requires immediate medical attention, we will want your child to see a doctor immediately. It is critical that we are able to reach you at ANYTIME during the school day. Please be sure to keep that in mind when you are traveling or are away from your home or office.

### Child Abuse/Neglect

OFMS's policy is that all faculty, administrators and staff share the responsibility of the prevention and reporting of suspected child abuse and sexual molestation.

The school will comply with the provisions of the laws of the State of Texas and the guidelines established by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.



## **What is Child Abuse?**

- Child abuse consists of any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development
- Child abuse includes any damage done to a child which cannot be reasonably explained and which is often represented by an injury or series of injuries appearing to be non-accidental in nature.

## Smoking

OFMS is a smoke-free environment; smoking is not permitted in or on campus, including the parking lot. Adults smoking on campus will be asked to extinguish their cigarette/cigar.

## Emergency Management Plan

The OFMS Emergency Management Plan is outlined in a separate document.

## Calendar

Every family is given a hard copy of the school calendar and it is also linked on our website. While we do not anticipate changes in the school calendar, we do reserve the right to do so. If this should occur, parents will be notified in a timely manner so that other arrangements can be made.

## Safety

For the safety of the students, families and visitors, OFMS requests that all individuals within the facility follow the policies of the school. These policies include but are not limited to the following:

- We walk in the hallways and classrooms.
- We use inside voices.
- Students are not allowed to exit the building without their parent or authorized adult pick up.
- Exit doors should be opened by adults only.
- Parents shall carefully supervise children in the parking lots.

## **SECTION 9- INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM**

### Infant/Toddler Classroom

The purpose of the infant/toddler program, serving children from the ages of 8 weeks until the age of 18 months, is to provide a warm, loving environment just as you would if

you were with your child during the day. Our goal is not to substitute as parents, but to support and enhance the important role of parenthood.

Appropriate activities and experiences allow a child a smooth entry into the Early Childhood class. The low child-teacher ratio and small class size give each child the space to develop.

### Infant/Toddler Curriculum

Maria Montessori believed that a child's helper in early infancy had the noble task to create a foundation for all later development and learning. She believed that the educational needs of the child under three years of age were extremely important but very different from those of the child past three.

The Montessori environment for children from infancy through three years must focus on, as its highest goal, the nurturing of sensitivity and caring among the children and adults in the environment. This time in the child's life is crucial in the development of trust, altruism and love. During these first few months of life, children are very dependent upon adults in their lives. In a Montessori environment, they are able to explore without assistance. Early in life, a child is stimulated by interesting objects at close range. As the year progresses, the child's range eventually expands as they learn to creep around and explore independently. At this level the prepared environment consists of a wide spectrum of activities and objects which are safe, cognitively stimulating, emotionally satisfying and developmentally appropriate.

The Montessori Toddler environment presents the child with a variety of appropriate experiences from which the child can choose freely. The environment is the curriculum for the child. Before three years of age, the child must have a wide range of experiences; after three years of age, the child refines and perfects new skills. It is assumed that in this manner, an appropriate match can be made between the child and needed learning experiences.

### Infant/Toddler Meal Time

Parents must provide signed and dated written feeding instructions on a monthly basis. OFMS will review the feeding instructions with parents every 30 days until the child is able to eat table food. Parents are responsible for milk, formula and table food. All bottles and training cups must be labeled with first and last name.

### Infant/Toddler Nap Schedule

Parents must provide a nap schedule to ensure the infant is able to maintain his or her own pattern of sleeping and waking periods. OFMS will provide cribs sheets. Pacifiers are allowed for infants; however, we will work with you to try to wean your child off of this dependency.

### Infant/Toddler Reports to Parents

OFMS will provide parents a daily written report outlining the following:

- 1) Times the child slept;
- 2) Times and amount of food consumed;
- 3) Times of diaper changes;
- 4) Child's general mood for the day; and
- 5) A brief summary of the activities in which the child participated.

### Infant/Toddler Outdoor Time

Daily morning and afternoon opportunities for outdoor time will be provided when weather permits.

### Infant/Toddler Daily Activities

OFMS will provide students with opportunities for thinking skills and sensory development, small-muscle development, large-muscle development and indoor/outdoor play. We will also work on language development, social/emotional development and provide opportunities for self-help skills such as toilet training, hand washing, and feeding.

### Infant/Toddler Uniforms

Students are not required to wear uniforms until they enter the 18 month classroom but do need to have 3 changes of clothes in their bin at all times.

### Infant/Toddler Arrival and Departure

Parents of our infants/toddler should use the East entrances of Building 4 to enter their child's classroom. To prevent the spread of germs, we respectfully ask that you refrain from walking through the environment without proper footwear. There is a designated sign/out station for each classroom.

One of the goals in our infant/toddler community is to provide an environment that respects the child's need for minimal distractions and interruptions. We love seeing our

parents spend time in the environment; however, it can become a safety issue and a major disturbance as we care for the other children in the classroom.

We ask parents in the infant/toddler classrooms to please limit their stay in the morning and in the evening. In the morning, most of our little ones are dropped off needing to be fed. In the evening it becomes even more of an issue as we have parents coming and going, car seats and diaper bags are being packed and the noise level escalates. For little ones it becomes unsettling with all of the added commotion. We invite you to call at anytime during the day to check on your child.

### Infant/Toddler Breastfeeding Mothers

Breastfeeding mothers are always welcome to do so in the comfort and privacy of our school. Please contact the office so that we can accommodate.

## **SECTION 10- BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

### Behavior Management

*“Let us remember that inner discipline is something to come to and not something already present. Our task is to show the way to discipline. Discipline is born when the child concentrates his attention on some object that attracts him/her not only with the useful exercise but with control of error.”*

Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind

Introduction: True Discipline, Montessori believed, comes from within. Our aim is to show the child the way to discipline. The child who can obey his/her inner guide is a disciplined child, Montessori wrote,

*“The peaceful atmosphere that pervaded the classroom as the children pursued their work was extremely touching. No one had provoked it, and no one could have obtained it by external means.”*

This type of discipline is a developmental process. In a Montessori classroom, there are children who have developed a degree of self- control and those who have little. The teacher must observe the children and endeavor to put them in contact with work, which engages their concentration. For it is only through the work of the child that true discipline will come. Children in a Montessori school are free to choose what work they will do and free to move about. They do not sit at fixed desks. **This does not mean there is no organization. In fact, the opposite is true.**

The organization in a Montessori classroom has to be extremely thorough in order for the child to be free to explore. The child guides him/herself in work through established, logical classroom rules; materials or logical consequences often provide the children with the guidance (or limits) they desire. Since much of the material is self-correcting, the child learns to solve problems by himself first or seek out help, as well as developing critical thinking skills.

The following will serve as guidelines for supporting children in their road to self-discipline. As such, these strategies aim to clarify our approaches to common situations with children as they gain self-control. They are not directives, however, and it is essential to remember that each situation with each child will require its own responses to best support that child's growth.

- We respect ourselves and other people
- We are careful with our own work and our friends' work and belongings.
- We are respectful to insects, animals and plants.
- We keep our surroundings and ourselves clean.

Our aim is for each student to become a citizen of the classroom. To accomplish this, the teacher guides the students to follow the classroom principles/rules. This enables them to understand the need and the fairness of rules. The children are encouraged to arbitrate their own disagreements by talking out their problems, under the guidance of the teacher. This same technique is used in solving differences between the student and the teacher, so there is an example for them to follow.

We strive to show the student a responsible way to function in a group with maximum involvement and minimum confrontation. This requires a certain degree of self-control. It is our goal not to impose our will on a student, but to set free the child's own potential for this self-discipline. Believe it or not – IT WORKS! **Whenever you are with your child at school, you will be responsible for their discipline.**

Discipline is instructive when:

- It supports self-esteem and allows children to feel capable, competent and pleasant with others
- It takes into account a child's developmental level of understanding and ability
- It changes as children's needs and behavior changes (there is change and growth)
- It acknowledges caring, cooperative, desirable behavior
- It is expressed positively. We speak of what we "do" and not what we "don't do"
- It guides, gives simple explanations, and offers alternatives so that a child can make choices. In time, this will aid the making of appropriate choices

- It is consistent
- It is based on self-discipline and self control (not coercion)

Setting limits helps children to:

- Feel secure and orient themselves in the world
- Find appropriate expressions for feelings that are hard to control
- Initiates the joy of lifelong learning

**Strategies of Behavior Management Used by Our Staff**

Prevention:

- Know the children: this helps to tailor disciplining instruction to each child
- Prepared environment: this helps to facilitate freedom of movement
- Awareness of transition time: teachers help children move from one activity to another without disruption
- Modeling good behavior

If prevention doesn't work:

- Try first to distract or defuse the situation, giving children a release
- Use "dos" (rather than "don't's") and give brief explanations
- Respond in a calm but firm manner, indicating what is expected from the child and what choices the child has
- Help the child realize the consequences of his or her actions
- Follow through with consequences
- Invite the child to sit by the teacher and watch another child's lesson until the child is ready to work responsibly
- Ask the child to sit and think about the choices he/she has made. Allow the child to think on the thinking mat for the appropriate amount of time. (1 minute for each year of age)
- Once the time has expired, get eye level with the child and ask him/her what choice he/she made, was it a good choice? Why? What could he/she have done differently?
- Encourage the child to learn from the experience what is acceptable, what is not acceptable and most importantly WHY.

**Under no circumstances will a child be spanked by the staff at The Oak Forest Montessori School.**

# The State of Texas

## Discipline and Guidance Policy

- **Discipline must be:**
  1. Individualized and consistent for each child;
  2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
  3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- **A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:**
  1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
  2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
  3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
  4. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
- **There must be no harsh, cruel or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:**
  1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
  2. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
  3. Pinching, shaking or biting a child;
  4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
  5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
  6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
  7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
  8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
  9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

***Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance***

***TDPRS-CCL 06/02/03***

## **SECTION 11-THE PURPOSE OF MINIMUM STANDARDS**

The purpose of having Minimum Standards is protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of children. If you have any questions or concerns the licensing staff can assist. You may obtain information about licensing standards or procedures by calling their toll free number, 1-800-862-5252 or visiting their website at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

### **Procedures to Review Minimum Standards and Licensing Inspection**

OFMS strives to comply with all minimum standards with the exception of those standards identified for specific types of child-care programs or activities that we do not offer. Parents have the option to review the Minimum Standards with Administration if they have any questions or concerns.

### **Minimum Standards and Licensing Office**

The Minimum Standards are the regulating documents that provide a framework for how childcare facilities operate in the state of Texas. At any time, a parent may request to review a copy of the standards. The Minimum Standards may also be found online at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

At any time, a parent may request to view the most recent inspection from the Licensing Office. To view this document in its entirety, please ask the administrative staff at OFMS. This report as well as previous inspection results may also be found online at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us). We have provided contact information for the local licensing office below:

Childcare Licensing Office  
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services  
2130 Alpine Street, Longview, Texas 75601  
903-757-0588

OFMS License # 148568

Report Suspected Child Abuse  
24 hours per day/ 7 days per week  
800-252-5400  
[www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)



# Parent Acknowledgement and Receipt of the OFMS Operational Policies and Parent-Student Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Oak Forest Montessori School Operational Policies and Parent-Student Handbook. I understand that it contains important information on policies and procedures. I realize this handbook is not intended to cover every situation which may arise but is simply a general guide to refer to.

I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the information and that I agree with the policies and rules of the school.

I further understand and acknowledge that OFMS may change, add or delete any policies or provisions in this handbook as it sees fit in its sole judgment and discretion.

I acknowledge and understand that this Operational Policies and Parent-Student Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior handbooks or materials previously distributed.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

