



**Walnut Farm**

**Montessori School**

# **Community Guide**

2020-2021

Dear Walnut Farm Community,

Welcome to Walnut Farm Montessori School 2020-2021!

WFMS is the first and only nationally accredited Montessori School in the state of Arkansas. We completed our second re-accreditation process in 2017, and continue to improve and prepare for our next re-accreditation process in 2024.

Since its founding in 1991, WFMS's community population has grown from one primary classroom in a house on Moberly Lane to our beautiful 6 acre campus with four buildings to accommodate our growing population. Walnut Farm also transitioned to a non-profit, and continues to stay true to its original purpose. Our school is firmly rooted in Montessori principles and offers an exemplary, authentic Montessori education for children ages 18 months to 9 years. Our mission is to provide a Montessori education that honors community and individuality by promoting peace, and empowering children for life-long learning.

In order to remain a healthy organization, we value respectful communication among all of the members of our community. Please carefully read this handbook. It shares many policies and procedures that we utilize to ensure a valuable educational experience for our students, parents and staff. Furthermore, it represents the spirit of positive expectations we have of everyone in our community. Due to Covid-19, we encourage you to carefully study our Covid-19 Policies and Procedures Guide as well, which temporarily amends certain aspects of this guide.

We are about to embark on a journey that Walnut Farm has never encountered before, and we are confident that we are taking the necessary precautions to the best of our ability, while staying as true as possible to our Montessori values. We appreciate your support and cooperation during these trying times, and we feel that overcoming this adversity together, as a community will only make us stronger.

We look forward to a year of wonder, growth and learning with you! Thank you for choosing Walnut Farm Montessori School to foster your child's life-long learning journey.

Sincerely,

Lynette Goss  
Head of School  
Walnut Farm Montessori School



The nationally accredited Walnut Farm Montessori School provides a Montessori education honoring community and individuality by promoting peace, and empowering children for life-long learning.

## Table of Contents

History of Walnut Farm.....	7
Mission Statement.....	7
Anti-Discrimination Policy.....	8
Absences.....	8
Early Morning Care.....	8
After School Care.....	8
Drop-in Care Program.....	9
Arrival and Dismissal Procedures.....	9
Back and Forth Bags.....	11
Birthdays.....	12
Board of Trustees.....	12
Child Abuse Reporting.....	12
Classroom Pictures.....	12
Cold Weather.....	13
Communications.....	13
Community Conflict Resolution Policy.....	14
Discipline Policy.....	15
Behavior Policy.....	16
Dress Code.....	19
Outdoor Shoes.....	20
Emergency Procedures Guide.....	20
Enrollment Policies.....	20
Evaluations and Conferences.....	25
Elementary Going out/Enrichment Activities.....	25
Fire and Tornado Drills.....	26
Fundraising.....	27
Harassment Policy and Procedures.....	27
Illness.....	30
Inclement Weather/Snow Days.....	31
Insurance.....	31
Internet.....	31
Library.....	31

Lice Policy.....	32
Lunches .....	33
Medication .....	34
Newsletters.....	34
Normalization.....	34
Observation of Classrooms .....	34
Practical Life Environment .....	35
Confidentiality.....	36
Outdoor Classroom .....	36
Parent Education Meeting and Requirements .....	36
Parking .....	36
Ratios: Student to Staff per DHS Guidelines .....	37
Recall Notice and Web Link .....	37
Snacks.....	37
Staggered Start .....	37
Statement of Rights .....	37
Tax ID Number .....	38
Toys .....	38
Transitions and Classroom Placements .....	38
Truth in Advertising Policy .....	39
Visitors/Volunteers Policy.....	39
Volunteerism.....	39

## About the Montessori Method



Nearly 100 years ago, an Italian physician inspired the birth of a worldwide educational movement. Dr. Maria Montessori, one of Italy's first female physicians, became interested in education while caring for mentally challenged children in a psychiatric clinic in Rome. There she combined sensory-rich environments and hands-on experiential techniques in the hopes of reaching children previously labeled "deficient and insane." The experiment was a resounding success. Within two years, the children were able to pass Italy's standardized public school tests. More importantly, Montessori's innovative practices had elicited positive learning behaviors from children previously left behind by

society.

In 1907, Montessori continued shaping her learning model by opening "a Children's House" for pre-school children living in the slums of San Lorenzo. With her scientific background to guide her, she observed how young people learned best when engaged in purposeful activity rather than simply being fed information. She drew upon her clinical understanding of children's cognitive growth and development in constructing an educational framework that would respect individuality and fulfill the needs of the "whole child." Dr. Montessori's pioneering work created a blueprint for nurturing all children—learning disabled to gifted—to become the self-motivated, independent and life-long learners that are the ultimate goal of today's educational reform movement.

Since that time, Montessori's philosophy, materials and practices have spread around the globe and have been implemented in a variety of cultural settings. Following Dr. Montessori's death in 1952, the practice enjoyed a renaissance in America as parents sought new learning options for their children. In 1960, parent and teacher Dr. Nancy McCormick Rambusch founded the **American Montessori Society (AMS)** to meet an overwhelming public demand for more information on Montessori education.

Today, Dr. Montessori's visionary ideas flourish as the cornerstone of a thriving educational practice. There are thousands of Montessori schools in the U.S. including hundreds of programs in public and charter schools, where the interest in enrollment often results in long waiting lists. However, because any school can call itself "Montessori" – there is no trademark on the name– AMS can only vouch for the authenticity of the programs as practiced in schools that are members of the Society.

As more and more schools incorporated core elements of her model—multi-age classrooms, early childhood Education—Montessori became widely recognized as being ahead of her time. Remarkably, her visionary ideas remain viable concepts that have profoundly influenced the entire educational landscape.

Walnut Farm Montessori School is accredited by the American Montessori Society.

*"During this early period, education must be understood as a help to the unfolding of the child's inborn psychic powers. This means that we cannot use the orthodox methods of teaching, which depends on talk."*

- Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*

## Suggested Readings

**Lilliard, Paula Polk.** *Montessori—A Modern Approach* (Schocken)

An Introduction to the Montessori approach to education at the preschool level.

**Montessori, Maria.** *The Absorbent Mind* (Schocken)

A discussion of the development of infants and young children, birth to three years.

**Montessori, Maria.** *The Discovery of the Child* (Kalakshetra)

Early writings of Dr. Montessori (updated in 1948) highlighting the materials and the works of the child in primary class, ages 3 to 6.

**Montessori, Maria.** *Education for a New World* (Kalakshetra)

Deals with the role of education in a changing world.

**Montessori, Maria.** *The Formation of Man* (Kalakshetra)

Includes material concerning Dr. Montessori's approach to world literacy.

**Montessori, Maria.** *From Childhood to Adolescence* (Schocken)

Addresses the development and education of the child from age seven through adolescence. Includes "Erdkinder" and "The Function of the University."

**Montessori, Maria.** *The Secret of Childhood* (Balantine Books)

An introduction, both practical and theoretical, including observations and insights into the nature of young children.

**Montessori, Maria.** *To Educate the Human Potential* (Kalakshetra)

Outlines the needs of the elementary age child regarding the acquisition of culture.

**Montessori, Mario.** *The Human Tendencies and Montessori Education* (AMI, Second Edition)

A classical essay on the imagination, the natural characteristics of the child, and the integration of human development and history.

**Montessori, Mario M., Jr.** *Education for Human Development* (Schocken)

Deals with the ideas of Montessori from a philosophical, psychological and educational point of view; foreword by Buckminster Fuller

**Seldin, Tim.** *How to Raise an Amazing Child The Montessori Way*

A practical parenting program to build a calm and happy home life with your child, from birth through age six.

**Standing, E.M.** *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work* (New American Library)

A biography, including Dr. Montessori's life, her development of material, the child's work in the class and the growth of the Montessori movement.

## History of Walnut Farm

History often reveals that legacies are born of humble beginnings and human desires to make the world a better place in which to live and nurture our families. In 1991, Maren Schmidt founded Walnut Farm Montessori School (WFMS) in response to a local cry for an alternative to traditional public education. The first primary class served ten families and operated out of an old two-story house on Moberly Lane in Bentonville, Arkansas. During its first five years, the school grew steadily and expanded to two primary classes of 24 students each. In 1996, with parents now firmly convinced of the value of Montessori education, an elementary class was added for children ages 6-9.

Defining moments are rare. Rarer still are the organizations and individuals that rise to the challenge and establish a legacy that has the potential to stand the test of time. It was in 1996 that Maren and Mark Schmidt did just this! With assistance from Tony Potochnik, builder, and David Swanson, architect and dedicated parent, they took an incredible leap of faith by relocating the campus to 4208 East Central Ave. and constructing our current primary and administration building. This building and the original 3-acre campus that surrounds it have served our school well for the past 29 years. Since its construction student enrollment has doubled in size, from less than 50 to over 100.

Through nearly 3 decades of employing the Montessori methodology, WFMS has succeeded in fulfilling the promise of its founder, Maren Schmidt, honoring the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, and evoking the self-confidence and independence of Northwest Arkansas children. It is with this same passion and enthusiasm that the school successfully completed the self-study and standards necessary to be granted full accreditation by the American Montessori Society. In March 2010, Walnut Farm Montessori School became the first accredited Montessori school in the state of Arkansas. In 2013, the Board of Trustees purchased the school's north building, expanding the campus to nearly six acres. At a time when mainstream schools are limiting or eliminating outdoor spaces altogether, WFMS has expanded the idea of Montessori nature education. We continue to develop and nurture our outdoor spaces to expand our learning experiences outside. In 2014, WFMS expanded the program to include two toddler environments allowing more students to begin their Montessori journey at Walnut Farm. With a rich history, academic achievements, and beautiful acreage, WFMS proudly offers an authentic Montessori education for children 18 months to 12 years of age.

***“Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead***

## Mission Statement

**The nationally accredited Walnut Farm Montessori School provides a Montessori education honoring community and individuality by promoting peace, and empowering children for life-long learning.**

## Anti-Discrimination Policy

Dr. Maria Montessori said, "The problem for us does not lie in the political action to save a nation or another; our efforts must be devoted, rather, to solving a psychological problem involving all [human]-kind, and as a consequence acquiring a clear conception of the kind of morality necessary to defend humanity as a whole." (*Education and Peace*, 1972)

On this premise and other teachings of Dr. Montessori, Walnut Farm Montessori School is committed to maintaining an environment that is free of any type of discrimination, and where students, staff and everyone associated with the school is treated with dignity and respect. Further, WFMS embraces the American Montessori Society's stance on equity and inclusion. The AMS website states, "A commitment to basic human rights such as freedom, dignity, safety, equitable treatment, and a standard of living adequate for health and well-being drive the Montessori commitment to education for peace and social justice."

Walnut Farm Montessori School's strict prohibition against discrimination includes, but is not limited to discrimination based upon a person's race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, age, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, or family status.

This anti-discrimination policy applies to, but is not limited to all educational opportunities, classroom practices, employment practices, compensation, training, hiring, advancement, promotion, discipline, discharge and the selection of vendors, contractors and consultants who do business with the school.

## Absences

Please call the school office to inform administration of any absence. This will help the teachers plan the lessons for the day more efficiently.

WFMS is supportive when families choose to take children out of school for an extended vacation. We ask that you please inform your classroom teacher and the administration office prior to departure.

\*\*Please note that the risk of falling behind when a child is away from school impacts some children more severely than others. If teachers determine that a child's academic progress has been jeopardized, it may require extra work outside of school.

## Early Morning Care

Early Morning Care will be offered before each school day from 7:15 a.m. to 7:35 a.m. Children will be cared for in the Toddler A building. These services are available for additional fees. Please note that space can become limited and is available on a first come, first served basis. If you are interested in these services, please contact the administration office.

## After School Care

(Direct Line: 479.321-4440 from 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.)

**After school care is offered daily from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This program allows children to remain at WFMS and enjoy a snack and supervised time with other students until parents arrive. Parents are asked to arrive no later than 6:00 p.m. as the school closes each evening at this time. Parents arriving after 6:00 p.m. will receive a \$25.00 late fee for the first minute, and \$5.00 per minute thereafter.** In the event that the parent is late picking up a child more than 3



times, WFMS reserves the right to remove the child from the program. If you are interested in these services, please contact the school administrator.

After School Care details:

1. Parents may contact the aftercare staff during the aftercare program hours (3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.) by calling: **479.321-4440**
2. There is no reduction in fees due to temporary absences of any nature including and not limited to vacation, illness, inclement weather and medical emergencies.
3. The after-care program calendar follows the WFMS school calendar. **If school is closed due to scheduled calendar events or inclement weather, there will be NO afterschool care program.**
4. A two-week notice is required to cancel an afterschool care program.
5. Contracted days are non-transferable. If additional days are needed on a one-time basis they will be billed as drop-in afterschool care at \$30 per day. Payment must be made prior to the drop-in date to ensure availability.
6. A **non-refundable fee of \$250.00** will be charged if at any time during the school year the after-care program contract is cancelled.
7. Parents should be aware of local weather conditions and make arrangements to pick-up their child early from aftercare if severe weather threatens the Bentonville area.

## Drop-in Care Program

On occasion there are openings for drop-in care. There is a \$10 fee for early morning care and a \$30.00 fee for each afternoon drop-in session. Afternoon session is 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. **The \$30.00 fee is charged for each session regardless if a child stays 30 minutes or 3 hours of the designated session. Arrangements and payments must be made prior to the date contracted through the administrative office.** Prior payment is requested in order for child to attend drop in care. Please contact the administration office if you are interested in these services.

Programs	Fees per year	Monthly Auto-debit
Early Morning Care 7:15 a.m. - 7:35 a.m.	\$900.00	\$90.00
Afterschool care 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	\$2,800.00	\$280.00

## Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Your child is now forming habits that last a lifetime. Punctuality and respecting the time of others are two qualities that we want to promote for future success in life. To allow a safe and smooth transition for your child and others, please respect the following guidelines while in the car line:

- ***Vehicle video equipment is off during arrival and dismissal.***
- ***It is a state law that cell phone use is prohibited in a school zone.***
- ***Vehicles should progress no faster than 10 mph in our car line and parking areas.***
- ***Students must remain INSIDE the vehicle until a greeter opens the door. Parents do not allow your child to stand out of the sunroof of your vehicle or extend his/her arms out of the windows will waiting to be greeted.***

## Arrival Procedure

Doors open at 7:40 a.m. Our staff will approach your car, greet you and your child, and escort your child into the building from 7:40 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. Please have your child unbuckled a before the greeter opens your car door. Please encourage your child to give proper and cheerful greetings. This is important for setting the theme for a smooth transition. To ensure optimal flow of the carline, communication with the greeter should be brief. Additionally, please make every effort to not block the circular drive. Greeting time ends at 8:00 a.m. For school safety, the greeters will then lock the front doors to each building at 8:00 a.m. and report to their next assignment.

Class promptly begins at 8:00 a.m., and we ask that you make every effort to be here on time to ensure that your child has a full three-hour work cycle. We recommend arriving as early as possible as this will ensure your child has adequate time to transition. We strongly encourage consistency in this process, as it will help your child acclimate to the expectations of coming to school

**Anyone arriving after the doors have been locked will be considered tardy (See tardy policy). There is no need to contact the office if you will be tardy. Instead, please only contact our office if your child will be absent for the day.** Being notified of an absence will help our staff to properly plan the activities of each classroom. Additionally, parents are encouraged to schedule doctors and outside appointments after school, when possible.

## Tardy Policy

Tardiness interferes with a child's progress in school and causes a disturbance for all members of the class. While we understand that sometimes circumstances happen and occasional tardy arrivals are unavoidable, being tardy should be a rare occasion for your child. **You are setting the example for your child. Please set a character-building example by arriving to school on time daily.**

- **Toddler A families** that arrive after 8:00 a.m. will need to escort toddler students to the Toddler A door facing Central Avenue and sign-in their child. A Toddler A teacher will greet your child at the door and have you sign in. **Toddler B families** that arrive after 8:00 a.m. will need to escort toddler students to the side door of the Toddler B classroom. A Toddler B teacher will greet your child at the door and have you sign in.
- Primary families that arrive after 8:00 a.m. will need to escort their child/children to the front door of the primary building and ring the doorbell. An administrator will have you sign in and will escort your child to their class.
- Elementary families arriving after the elementary door has been locked will need to escort their child to the front door of the elementary building and ring the doorbell. A staff member will greet your child at the door.

## Dismissal Procedure

**Toddlers enrolled in the half-day toddler program will dismiss at 11:15 a.m. Toddler A and Toddler B students will dismiss from the Toddler A building.** Parents should park and walk to the door facing Central Ave. to pick up their child. Communication with your child's teacher should be brief. This will help to prevent backups in the car line. **It is the law that the parent or driver is responsible for buckling the child into the seat. At 2:55 p.m., parents should park and walk to the door facing Central Ave. to pick up their child.**

**Primary dismissal will begin at 11:30 a.m.** We will bring the children out to the front hallway for morning dismissal. Staff will escort your child to your car. We request that the driver please pull forward, to the staff parking lot, and buckle your child into his/her car seat. Communication with your child's teacher should be brief. This will help to prevent backups in the car line. **It is the law that the parent or driver is responsible for buckling the child into the seat.**

If you need to come inside the building, please park in a parking space, so that a steady flow of traffic can be maintained. We ask that everyone follow this procedure so that we can assure a timely and safe dismissal for all our children. At 3:00 p.m., students will be dismissed at the following areas:

Primary: Primary Building

Lower/ Upper Elementary: Elementary Building

**Toddler A and B will dismiss at 2:55 for Toddler A building.**

If you need to pick up your child early, please call ahead and we will try to have your child ready. This will help keep classroom disruptions to a minimum.

Please make sure you pull up as far as possible in the pick-up circle to prevent the car pool line from blocking the street.

- Toddler A and Toddler B half day dismisses at 11:15 a.m.
- Primary half day dismisses at 11:30 a.m.
- Toddler A and B full day dismisses at 2:55 p.m.
- Primary A full day dismisses at 3:00 p.m.
- Primary B full day dismisses at 3:00 p.m.
- Primary C full day dismisses at 3:00 p.m.
- Lower Elementary dismisses at 3:00 p.m.
- Upper Elementary dismissal at 3:00 p.m.

If you have a change in the person designated to pick up your child, you are required to inform administration. If someone other than the person(s) listed on your release record is to pick up your child, you must first call the school or give a note to the greeter. Please note: The driver will be asked for ID.

**If you do not pick up your child within 15 minutes of his/her scheduled school day dismissal time, your child will join the aftercare program until your arrival for a charge of \$30.00.** Parents that fail to pick up their child from the after school care program by 6:00 p.m. will be fined \$25.00 after one minute of lateness, and \$5.00 per minute thereafter. In the event a parent is late in picking up their child more than 3 times, WFMS reserves the right to remove the child from the program.

## **Back and Forth Bags**

- **Toddler and Primary**

We will provide each newly enrolled child with a small canvas bag to carry home papers, newsletters and soiled clothing. Make sure your child's bag contains a Ziploc bag with a complete change of clothing, including shoes (toddler and primary). All items should be marked with your child's name. Learning to get their things together is a very important developmental process for our children. Please help your children remember their bags until they can do it themselves. Replacement bags are available for \$20.00 each.

**Please, no backpacks or other bags, as space is limited and backpacks are difficult for us to monitor.**

- **Elementary**

We will provide each newly enrolled Elementary student with a school issued back pack.

Replacement back packs are available for \$27.00 each.

## Birthdays

### Toddler Birthday Celebration

Birthdays will not be celebrated in the toddler classrooms. For this tender age, it is too disruptive to the children's day. Consistency is very important.

### Primary Birthday Celebration

We have a special ceremony for birthdays. **Please ask your child's teacher for a birthday celebration handout about two weeks before your child's birthday. Birthday celebrations are to be scheduled in advance with the child's teacher.** Please send along photos and a sentence of what your child was doing at each of their previous birthdays (such as walking, living in a certain place, favorite books, etc.) We will include it in the celebration. Please refrain from bringing in "sweet treats" **Parents are welcome to attend this special moment with their child.**

### Elementary Birthday Celebration

With the guidance of their teachers, children in the elementary classrooms plan their own birthdays. The teacher will be in touch with you to help arrange this celebration.

## Board of Trustees

Walnut Farm Montessori School, Inc. is a non-profit corporation with 501-(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. We have a Head of School and administration team who handle the day-to-day administration of school business, and a Board of Trustees to help give direction in policy formation and long-term planning. Our Board consists of:

Leila Runyan, President  
Katie Bloodworth, Vice President  
Amanda Phillips, Secretary  
Smita Vadlamani, Treasurer  
Megan Overbey  
Max Berenstein

## Child Abuse Reporting

The child abuse hotline is 1-800-482-5964.

Children may be subject to interviews by licensing staff, child maltreatment investigators and/or law enforcement officials for the purpose of determining licensing compliance or for investigative purposes. Child interviews do not require parental notice or consent.

## Classroom Pictures

School pictures will be taken in the second semester. Look for announcements in class and school emails for picture dates for your child's class. A school yearbook will be available for purchase in the spring of each year. In addition to your child's individual and class picture being featured, the school's photographer captures candid pictures from all WFMS events to include in the school yearbook.

## Cold Weather

At Walnut Farm, we believe there is rarely inclement weather, only improperly dressed people. Children will be taken outside almost every day. If for medical reasons your child should not go outside, it is best to keep your child home from school that day.

## Cold Weather and Coats

- Children will be asked to put their coats on when they go outside to the outdoor classroom or playground.
- A child who chooses to remove his coat while working or playing because he is too warm will hang up the coat in the outdoor space. If he should become cold again he will put on his coat. If not, he will bring his coat inside when he returns to the classroom.
- On rainy days children are required to have a raincoat with them and wear it in the outdoor classroom and on the playgrounds. No umbrellas please.
- If there is lightning, extreme wind, or extreme cold, the children will work indoors.

**Please make sure you label all coats, hats, and mittens with your child's name. If your child is unable to locate a clothing item, please remind your child to check the school's lost and found bins located on the east end of the primary building just inside the privacy fence gate.**

## Communications

Please call the school's main number (479-271-9424) to communicate with your child or their teacher during the day. The administration will take a message and deliver your message to the classroom. **You may also hand a note to the greeter in the morning.** Please reframe from giving verbal instructions or requests to the morning greeters.

Email is also a way to contact us; however, there are times we are not able to check our email at regular intervals.

Below are the emails for administration:

Lynette Goss - [lynette@walnutfarm.org](mailto:lynette@walnutfarm.org)

Karel Hayre - [karel@walnutfarm.org](mailto:karel@walnutfarm.org)

Leslie Johnson - [leslie@walnutfarm.org](mailto:leslie@walnutfarm.org)

Perla Delgado- [spanish@walnutfarm.org](mailto:spanish@walnutfarm.org)

Below are each classroom email address:

Toddler A Classroom – [toddlera@walnutfarm.org](mailto:toddlera@walnutfarm.org)

Toddler B Classroom – [toddlerb@walnutfarm.org](mailto:toddlerb@walnutfarm.org)

Primary Classroom A – [classrooma@walnutfarm.org](mailto:classrooma@walnutfarm.org)

Primary Classroom B – [classroomb@walnutfarm.org](mailto:classroomb@walnutfarm.org)

Primary Classroom C – [classroomc@walnutfarm.org](mailto:classroomc@walnutfarm.org)

Lower Elementary – [lowerel@walnutfarm.org](mailto:lowerel@walnutfarm.org)

Upper Elementary- [upperel@walnutfarm.org](mailto:upperel@walnutfarm.org)

## Community Conflict Resolution Policy

Respectful communication is at the heart of the Walnut Farm community. From time to time questions or disagreements may arise concerning the interpretation and/or implementation of the policies, practices and daily operation of Walnut Farm Montessori School. In keeping with our mission to provide a peaceful, cooperative and collaborative environment, **parents are encouraged to make every effort to resolve issues and disagreements directly with the person involved** in a timely confidential manner using the peaceful conflict resolution process as follows:

- ***I think we have a problem.*** Please let your fellow community member know what you are feeling
- ***What is the problem?*** This involves a statement of commitment from all parties involved to come to a peaceable and win-win situation.
- ***What are all the solutions to the problem?*** Allow one another to offer solutions to the problem that may work for both parties.
- ***What is the best solution?*** Try to come up with the best solutions.
- ***Is it working?*** Check in with each other on occasion to make sure it is still a good solution.

**Discussions should be limited to the parties concerned. Involving additional community members or outside individuals is not constructive and is potentially damaging. Disrespectful communication or communication occurring outside of the boundaries of this policy and/or behavior that negatively impacts Walnut Farm Montessori School or the WFMS community is grounds for dismissal from the school.**

Walnut Farm will not tolerate discrimination or sexual harassment. Situations that appear to involve discrimination or sexual harassment should be reported immediately to the Head of School. If the Head of School exhibits behaviors of discrimination or sexual harassment, situations should be reported to the Board of Trustees President.

## Problem Solving

Our school has an open door policy on problem solving. When encountering a problem with a staff member, we ask that you follow the following procedure:

1. Address the concern with the staff person that can best solve the problem.
2. Use the conflict resolution techniques discussed on the previous page.
3. If you feel your conflict was not resolved by meeting with the staff person or it is inappropriate to approach the staff member directly, please utilize our grievance policy procedure below.

**Direct, open, and respectful communication is necessary for a healthy school community.**

Feel free to contact the Head of School, Lynette Goss, via email at [lynette@walnutfarm.org](mailto:lynette@walnutfarm.org), or via the school phone: 479.271.9424.

## Grievance Policy

If a parent or guardian believes an action by a teacher or school employee is unfair or inappropriate a written grievance may be filed with the Head of School. Details of the incident or problem should be factual and concise. Include what outcome with regard to the child, teacher or school you are seeking. The Head of School will make the final decision in all grievance matters exercising his or her sole and absolute discretion. Grievance decisions by the Head of School cannot be the subject of a new grievance. Participation in the grievance process will not supersede or replace any requirements for withdrawal from Walnut Farm Montessori School.

## Discipline Policy

At Walnut Farm Montessori School, we see discipline as helping the children to develop an internal focus and control to enable them to make positive choices. Through the use of the materials, the child develops concentration, and through concentration comes inner discipline. We establish necessary boundaries to give the children methods and techniques to control their own behavior, through consistent modeling and dealing constructively with problems. We strive for a balance of freedom and structure, linked with a high level of responsibility. That balance is individualized based on the needs of the child. Our goal is an internalized level of obedience, wherein the child behaves because it is the right thing to do, whether or not the adult is directly monitoring. This is the kind of citizen we hope for in the world. Positive discipline is a process that takes time; it begins at birth, and continues through the four planes of development, until around 25 years of age. Discipline to us is not something that is done to the child, but is developed within the child. It may not be as immediate as a rewards/ punishment model, but its outcomes run deeper.

Please note that all children experience conflict with peers. Children are learning to cooperate and socially interact. As they practice social interaction, conflicts with peers naturally occur. They are still learning self-control and the sense of personal space. Further, in the early elementary years, relationship struggles often occur as the children become more independent and want to handle friendships and group activities on their own terms.

As parents, you can assist your child by considering their conflicts learning opportunities for your child and teachable moments for you. You can model various healthy reactions to frustrations and your own conflicts. You can also discuss and role-play with your child proper ways to build trust, show respect, give empathy, manage anger and practice forgiveness.

## Classroom expectations:

1. Everyone must keep their hands to themselves.
2. Everyone must use a quiet indoor voice.
3. Everyone must walk.
4. Everyone must choose appropriate work, use the work, then put the work away ready for the next person.

5. Everyone must work at a table or a floor rug.
6. Everyone must show respect to others through words and actions.

Violation of these rules will be addressed with redirection or the problem-solving process.

### **The conflict resolution process follows:**

**Stop! I think we have a problem!** Adult helps children realize they are in a conflict situation.

**What is the problem?** The adult through observation and questioning helps children verbalize the problem. This also involves a statement of commitment from all parties involved to come to a peaceable and win-win situation. For example, if two children want to work with the same materials at the same time, we would agree to come to some solution that both were happy with or no one would get to use that piece of material.

**What are all the solutions to the problem?** The adult guides the children through possible ways to solve the situation.

**What is the best solution?** The adult guides the children to agreeing on a solution and implementing it.

**Is it working?** The adult checks back through observation and questioning to make sure that the solution agreed upon is meeting the needs of the children.

This model of problem solving also helps our children learn critical thinking skills. We hope you will use this model of problem solving with your child. We think you will be amazed at how well a three or four-year-old can be stepped through this process. And it is heartwarming to see a five-year-old use it with no adult guidance!

## **Behavior Policy**

The following action will be taken in the case of disruptive behavior, which includes but is not limited to: not following the instructions of the teacher or assistant, physically harming another person, repeated disruption of others work, teasing, harming school materials, fleeing the environment, name calling, obscene language or gestures, mistreating school property, bullying, or sexual harassment.

### **For toddler and primary children:**

1. First offense: The teacher will remind the child of classroom expectations, help to mediate the conflict resolution process (if needed), and offer alternative options for behavior.
2. Second offense (same day): The child will be asked to sit in the waiting chair or asked to sit next to the teacher or assistant until the child is ready to work again peacefully.
3. If in primary, Third offense (same day): Child will be sent to the office and parent will be called. The child may be sent home.
4. If a child reaches more than 3 offenses in a 2-week period it may be considered a severely disruptive behavior pattern. Teachers will handle this in the following manner:



- The teacher will communicate the issue with the head of school and conduct a written observation of the child. Through this observation the teacher will plan accommodations either through the environment or the teacher's interactions with the child.
  - If these accommodations do not solve the problem, the teacher will ask the head of school as well as a peer to conduct a written observation of the child, followed by their recommendations.
  - If the above accommodations do not show improvement, a conference with parents will be scheduled to devise a behavior modification plan.
5. If a child flees the designated environment without the permission of the teacher or assistant, the child's parents will be contacted and the child may be sent home.

**For elementary children:**

1. First offense: Teacher will remind the child of the classroom expectations and offer alternative options for behavior.
2. Second offense: Teachers will help to mediate the conflict resolution process, if needed, child will be asked to sit alone (in classroom) or near a teacher. Teachers will assist student in filling out a behavior reflection that will be shared with their parents. If the behavior is severely disruptive and/ or disrespectful, the child will be sent to the office.
3. Third offense, (same day) child will be sent to the office and parent will be called. In severe cases, the child may be sent home for the day.
4. If a child reaches more than 3 offenses in a 2-week period it may be considered a severely disruptive behavior pattern. Teachers will handle this in the following manner:
  - The teacher will communicate the issue with the head of school and conduct a written observation of the child. Through this observation the teacher will plan accommodations either through the environment or the teacher's interactions with the child.
  - If these accommodations do not solve the problem, the teacher will ask the head of school as well as a peer to conduct a written observation of the child, followed by their recommendations.
  - If the above accommodations do not show improvement, a conference with parents will be scheduled to devise a behavior modification plan.
5. If a child flees the designated environment without the permission of the teacher or assistant, the child's parents will be contacted and the child may be sent home.

Consequences for disruptive behavior that continues over a period of time include, but are not limited to:

- Removal of child from the classroom and sent to the office
- Parents notified and asked to pick up child from school or event
- Conference with parents
- Requirement for specialized support
- Behavior plan developed that may include but is not limited to: recommendations for evaluations, diary journal by parents, plan of action for when the behavior occurs, journaling of behaviors by parent and teacher.
- Possible dismissal

### Toddler Biting Policy

Biting is part of toddler development. It is usually a result of not enough and/or ineffective use of language. We will always work to give the words to the child who is biting. Coaching of the appropriate words is the best way to resolve the problem quickly. **If a child bites three times in one day, or if the skin is broken, they will be sent home.** The parent of the biter and the parent of the child who has been bitten will be called by the teacher or administration if the skin has been bruised or broken. The teacher or witness must fill out a report for the biter and a report for the child that has been bitten. If a child becomes a chronic biter, the parents may be asked to remove their child from the school until the behavior disappears.

### Primary and Elementary Biting Policy

If a primary student intentionally bites another student, the child's parents will be contacted. The parent of the biter and the parent of the child who has been bitten will be called by the teacher or administration if the skin has been bruised or broken. The teacher or witness must fill out a report for the biter and a report for the child that has been bitten. If a child becomes a chronic biter, the parents may be asked to remove their child from the school until the behavior disappears.

If an elementary student intentionally bites another child, the child's parents will be contacted AND he/she will be sent home for the rest of the day. The parent of the child whom has been bitten will be called by the teacher or administration if the skin has been bruised or broken. The teacher or witness must fill out a report for the biter and a report for the child that has been bitten. If a child becomes a chronic biter, the parents may be asked to remove their child from the school until the behavior disappears.

### Bullying Policy

Walnut Farm is committed to a safe and peaceful educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers, and patrons, free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. **Bullying is repeated, purposely cruel incidents, or threats of harm that involve the same people, in the same roles.** Preschool children are typically not developmentally capable of carrying out bullying because of its premeditated, deliberate and intentional nature.

Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated at Walnut Farm. If a child is participating in bullying, he/she will be sent to the office to conference with the Head of School. Parents will be called and child will be sent home for that day. Additionally, elementary children will fill out a behavior reflection and be asked to contribute a solution to make amends with the offended party.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Classroom Disruption-** Temper tantrums, running, interrupting the work of others, excessive loud noises, screaming, disorderly conduct

**Teasing** – name-calling, insulting, or other behavior that would hurt others’ feelings or make them feel bad about themselves

**Exclusion** – starting rumors, telling others not to be friends with someone, or other actions that would cause someone to be without friends

**Fleeing Environment-**leaving the designated environment without permission from the teacher or assistant

**Physical Aggression-** pushing, slapping, grabbing, flicking, poking, pinching, tripping, or other violations of personal space

**Severe Physical Bullying** – punching, kicking, and similar behavior that could result in injury to others

**Threat of serious violence** – threats of using a weapon, or other conduct representing a direct physical threat to anyone; may require a report to authorities

**Harassment** – racial, ethnic, or sexual name-calling or other severe harassment as defined in the WFMS harassment policy

**Thank you for helping to provide a safe environment for our children.**

#### **Home expectations**

Please remember that sending a child home is a last resort due to inappropriate behavior that has been redirected many times. We greatly appreciate your support in helping your child understand what behaviors are acceptable and appropriate.

**Please Note: Physical punishment shall not be administered to children.**

**(State Minimum licensing requirements for child care centers 500.2)**

**(State minimum licensing requirements for child care centers 501.1)**

#### **Dress Code**

Please mark all of your child's clothes, jackets, mittens, hat, etc. with your child's name. WFMS and its staff is not held responsible for any loss or damage to clothes or personal articles.

When selecting school clothes, help your child choose pants that they can get up and down easily and shoes that they can put on by themselves. We will be gardening, painting, and using scissors, so it is best to send children to school in practical work clothes. Children should be dressed appropriately for all weather conditions. All classes play outdoors daily except on days with extreme inclement weather.

**Cowboy boots and flip-flops are NOT acceptable footwear at school as they are slippery outside, noisy inside, and can be dangerous.** In addition, we have found that children who wear sandals to school are the ones who fall and skin their knees on the outside concrete porch. **Your child should only wear soft-soled, closed toe shoes free of lights or characters for school, so that the children can run and play safely.**

**Please refrain from wearing clothing with characters of any kind, as this type of clothing is very distracting.** It is also important for grace and courtesy that non-religious hats be removed when entering classrooms.

**We request that you refrain from using pull-ups for toddlers and primary children. Non potty-trained toddlers must use diapers. Primary children must be potty-trained and wear cloth underwear.**

## Outdoor Shoes

We require that each child have a pair of rubber boots marked with their name to be left at school. The children use these boots when doing work in the outdoor classroom and when it is wet and muddy during recess times. We believe there is rarely inclement weather, only inappropriately dressed people.

## Emergency Procedures Guide

Walnut Farm has plans and procedures in place for emergencies, crisis, and disaster. The faculty is trained and updated in the emergency procedures. If you would like a copy of the complete Emergency and Procedures Guide, please ask for a copy in the administrative office.

## Enrollment Policies

### Admission Procedure

We believe that choosing a school is a process that takes time. We recommend that families do the following:

- a) Check school website at; [walnutfarmmontessori.com](http://walnutfarmmontessori.com), click Prospective Families, then Admissions.
- b) Tour our building and classrooms while classes are in session
- c) Submit the WFMS application/parent questionnaire along with the \$100.00 fee, child's immunization records and a photo of your child
- d) Complete a student visit session (primary and elementary only)
- e) Complete the enrollment contract

Prior to being admitted to our program, all children must be registered by a parent or legal guardian. Pre-registration (Re-Enrollment) for children currently enrolled in the program is in February. Application and questionnaire for new students are will be offered after touring the school. In the event of reaching maximum class size, first preference will be given to families already in attendance at Walnut Farm Montessori, and then enrollment will be open to the community.

The following documents are needed for enrollment:

- a) Application and parent questionnaire forms
- b) Photo of child
- c) Current immunization records
- d) Application fee of \$100.00 (non-refundable and non-transferrable)
- e) Enrollment fee of \$350.00 per child (non-refundable and non-transferable)

The following admission policies and criteria are to maximize the compatibility among selected students, their families, and our school within Montessori philosophy and values. We take into account evidence of a student's academic achievement, long-term commitment to enrollment in the program, and commitment to a school-family partnership.

1. We practice a policy of non-discrimination relative to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation and national origin regarding the receipt and review of applications for admission.
2. Admissions decisions require, and are made contingent upon receipt or completion of, all requested tests, screening, student records, student and family visits and interviews, and other forms included in our application/admission package.
3. We respect the rights of privacy of all prospective students and families, and honor the confidentiality of all reports, records, interview information, and any other information or materials obtained as part of the admission application process.
4. While embracing the philosophy that each child develops in a unique way and welcoming applications from a wide variety of students, we also recognize our limitations in meeting some highly complex or specialized learning needs. Our admissions procedure will therefore take into account our ability to accommodate particular student's learning needs without disruption to our program as one factor when evaluating applicants. Students who have learning differences that fall within our ability to address may be accepted on a provisional basis, with additional stipulations (such as a requirement for specialized and/or therapist assistance.)
5. An Admissions Committee, consisting of the Head of School, the administrative staff, and classroom teachers will make all admission decisions. Admission decisions are based on the following general criteria:

### Primary Students

- Able to cooperate in a social group
- Shows respect for authority
- Shows respect for other children
- Independent in toileting skills

- Able to understand and follow school and classroom rules and guidelines
- Demonstrates an eagerness to learn
- Developmentally functional in all aspects of daily school routines

### **Elementary Students**

- Able to cooperate in a social group
- Shows respect for authority
- Shows respect for other children
- Demonstrates an eagerness to learn
- Capable of working independently
- Understands and follows school and classroom rules and guidelines
- Developmentally functional in all aspects of daily school routines
- Possesses current academic and life skills at level commensurate with targeted class

### **Families**

- Understanding of and commitment to Walnut Farm Montessori School philosophy and principles
- Understanding of and commitment to long-term participation in the Montessori education process
- Understanding their role in partnering with the school (e.g. volunteerism, attendance at school meetings and functions, support of school's vision and growth)

### **Contracts**

Enrollment is secured by a binding contractual agreement with the school. We will begin to re-enroll current students for the 2021/2022 school year in February 2021. To secure your enrollment for the next school year, we must have a contract signed by the end of the designated re-enrollment period.

If your circumstances are such that you do not feel comfortable signing a contract, for example, a possible job transfer, please contact the Head of School for more information on how to handle your enrollment.

### **Eligibility**

Our toddler community is available to children ages 18 months to 3 years, regardless of race, color, religion or creed. DHS requires that a child be 18 months of age before they may enter our program and not older than 36 months prior to the first day of the school year.

Primary classrooms are open to all children between the ages of 3-6 years, regardless of race, color, religion or creed. To be accepted into the primary program, all children must be using the toilet independently. For enrollment details, please refer to our admissions procedures.

Our elementary classroom is open to all children between the ages of 6-12 years, regardless of race, color, religion or creed. For elementary enrollment information, please refer to our admissions procedures.

Class placement will be made by the administrative team and is determined based on the child's chronological age, maturation level, and recommendation from any previous teacher. The needs of the child will be of primary importance in every decision made.

Children with challenges will be accepted into the program upon medical recommendation **only** if we can provide the necessary accommodations within the context of our current Montessori environments. In such cases, in addition to the completion of the basic required forms, parents or legal guardians will be required to provide medical documentation of any special conditions, including a description of any special care requirements. The Head of School and parents will work closely with the teachers.

### Getting Ready for Kindergarten Calendar

The Arkansas Department of Human Services requires Walnut Farm Montessori School to supply the Getting Ready for Kindergarten calendar website link ([http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/classroom\\_docs/DHS\\_RICalendar.pdf](http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/classroom_docs/DHS_RICalendar.pdf)) to all families who are enrolled in our program.

### Tuition

Tuition is based on our ten-month school year. Payment may be made in full or monthly payments can be arranged via automatic bank draft on the 15th of each month, August through May. No reductions are made for illness or absences. A one-time enrollment fee of \$350.00 is due upon admission and is non-refundable.

There is a yearly materials fee for Toddler and Primary students of \$275.00. Elementary students have a yearly enrichment materials fee of \$450.00.

When entering our program after August, tuition will be pro-rated at a monthly rate. Tuition rates given are subject to change without notice.

## Tuition Fees for Academic Year 2020-2021

Program	*Tuition paid in full	**Monthly Payment Plan (10 payments)
Lower and Upper Elementary 8:00 to 3:00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$9290.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$939.00 (\$9390.00) Tuition Insurance: \$432.00
Primary Half day 8:00 to 11:30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$7160.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$726.00 (\$7260.00) Tuition insurance: \$334.00
Primary Full day 8:00 to 3:00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$8890.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$899.00 (\$8990.00) Tuition Insurance: \$414.00
Toddler Half day 8:00 to 11:15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$7160.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$726.00 (\$7260.00) Tuition insurance: \$334.00
Toddler Full day 8:00 to 3:00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$8890.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$899.00 (\$8990.00) Tuition insurance: \$414.00
Early Care 7:15 – 7:35 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$900.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$90.00
Aftercare 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2800.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$280.00

### Tuition Insurance

We offer tuition insurance to help protect your investment in the school and the school's investment in your child. **It is required if making monthly payments. It is optional when paying in full.** A copy of the insurance brochure is available in the office.

### Financial Aid

The Board of Trustees will allocate up to 1% of each year's budgeted tuition income to be available for use as financial aid to designated recipients. Application for financial aid will be submitted to the Schools and Services Provider (SSS) or other designated service provider that will review the submitted information. Applicants may incur processing fees by SSS. Parents may apply online during January and early February to be considered for the following school year. For more information, contact the school administrator.

### Probationary Enrollment

New students are accepted into WFMS on a 8-calendar week probationary period beginning with the students first day of classes. **Parents will receive a daily verbal report from their child's teacher regarding adjustment to the classroom environment.** Any behavior that is disruptive to the successful workings of the classroom will be reported to you on a daily basis and recommendations will be made on how to help your child adjust. Most children are working comfortably in the classroom after six to eight weeks. When we observe a student having difficulty adjusting to a classroom environment we will have a conference with the parents to develop a home/school strategy to assure success. Further, we strongly recommend that parents attend all parent education meetings to strengthen the partnership between home and school.



## Termination of Enrollment

Every effort will be made to avoid terminating a child's enrollment in the school. However, termination of enrollment will be considered under the following circumstances:

- Failure of the parents to cooperate with the school's policies
- Failure by the parents to provide health forms and other paperwork required for enrollment
- Excessive biting
- Uncontrolled hitting
- Behavioral problems that are disruptive to the classroom atmosphere and other students
- Parent's refusal to seek professional help when suggested as being in the child's best interests
- Inability of the school to meet the apparent needs of the child, as determined by teaching staff consensus
- Parent's disrespectful behavior toward other parents, children, teachers, administrators or any other staff
- **Physical, academic, or emotional issues that require excessive one-on-one attention**

## Evaluations and Conferences

There will be a conference as well as a progress report given to parents in the fall semester as well as in the spring semester. However, feel free to schedule a conference with your teacher when needed.

## Elementary Going out/Enrichment Activities

Our elementary students are offered a variety of field trip and enrichment opportunities throughout the school year. Volunteer parents serve as drivers for these activities. All elementary parents are required to sign the necessary forms in order for their child to participate in field trips as well as forms necessary to chaperone.

## The Role of the Chaperone

The role of the chaperone is to provide a means of transportation for the students. The chaperone ensures that the students carry out the going out activity safely. The decisions of where to go and how to carry out the going out activity are the responsibility of the teachers and students. All chaperones must have copies of current vehicle insurance record, current driver's license, and individual record check on file in the office **before** they may drive children to an event.

While in the vehicle:

- The chaperone will provide seats in the vehicle that have appropriate seat belts.
- The chaperone will expect the children to speak softly, face forward, and keep hands and body to themselves while riding in the vehicle.
- The chaperone will make sure that any T.V. equipment in the vehicle is turned off.
- The chaperone will make sure cell phones are used for emergency purposes only.
- The chaperone will, as much as possible, stay with the car caravan while traveling.

- The chaperone should always make sure they have a field trip bag with them before departing on any field trip.

On arrival and during the event:

- The chaperone will take frequent head counts of his/her group of children.
- The chaperone will stay with the group at all times.
- The chaperone will ask children to follow the rules, if necessary.

## Guidelines for student behavior during a field trip

### During Transportation

- The children should wear a seat belt at all times while in the vehicle.
- The children must face forward.
- The children should speak in soft voices.
- The children must keep their hands to themselves.
- The children may not disturb the driver in any way.

### During the Activity

- The children must keep their hands to themselves.
- The children must stay with their designated driver or group.
- During the trip, the children will show respect to the teachers, presenters, volunteers, and classmates.
- The children will speak in soft voices.
- If in a restaurant, the children will use proper table manners.

If the child is unable to meet the behavior expectations, they may be denied future going out privileges.

## Fire and Tornado Drills

**The Head of School/Administrator is responsible for initiating a fire or tornado drill on a monthly basis.** Children are coached frequently about how a fire drill and tornado drill will be handled.

### Fire Drills

Fire Drills are conducted every 30 days. Evacuation routes must be posted in each room. A written evaluation of each fire drill will be kept on file for 12 months. When the fire alarm rings, the teacher or assistant teacher will:

1. Teacher must make sure all students exit building to the designated meeting area.
2. Assistant must check the bathrooms. Classroom A is responsible for checking the library.
3. Assistant will close the back door after all areas (including behind shelving) have been checked.
4. Administration will recheck all areas of the building and exit to the designated area.
5. Teacher or Assistant must check class roster and take a head count to report to the Head of School/Administrator.

6. Teacher/Assistant must take with them: walkie-talkie, attendance book, information book, and cell phone.
7. Head of School/Administrator will give the all clear for classes to reenter the building.
8. Teachers will submit their drill log sheet to administration immediately following the drill procedure.

## Tornado Drills

1. The Head of School/Administrator will announce the tornado drill.
2. Children should move quickly to the bathrooms. If not all students can fit in bathrooms; they will be escorted by a staff member to overflow to the laundry room.
3. Children will stand quietly or sit bent over their knees, on the floor, hands covering their heads.
4. Teacher/Assistant must have with them: walkie-talkie, attendance book, information book, and cell phone.
5. Teachers/Assistant will count all children.
6. Head of School/Administration will alert when all is clear.
7. Head of School/Administration will document date and time of drill.
8. Teachers will submit their drill log sheet to administration immediately following the drill procedure.

## Fundraising

Walnut Farm maintains a culture of giving. **Our school raises additional money for, materials, growth, and enhancement projects.**

**The Fall Festival is an important fund-raising event that takes place each year; it is organized and executed by the Parent Association. All families are encouraged to participate in this event. This is a great way to get involved in our school community and offer your time, skills, and talents.**

**An Annual Giving Campaign takes place each year. Annual Giving is a meaningful way to contribute tax-deductible donations to targeted goals that enhance the learning experience of all the children. We strive for 100% community participation in Annual Giving.**

## Harassment Policy and Procedures

### PHILOSOPHY

Walnut Farm Montessori School affirms the dignity of every man, woman and child, and is committed to an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work or learn in an atmosphere that is free from discriminatory practices. Therefore,

#### I. HARASSMENT POLICY:

THE SCHOOL STRONGLY OPPOSES AND PROHIBITS ALL FORMS OF HARASSMENT (e.g. harassment based on an individual's race, color, age, religion, sex, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national

origin, ancestry, and disability), WHETHER VERBAL, PHYSICAL, OR ENVIRONMENTAL. ANY PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS POLICY WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION, UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION FOR EMPLOYEES AND/OR REQUIRED WITHDRAWAL FOR STUDENTS.

- A. It is the policy of the educational programs of the school to maintain a productive working environment that is free from any type of harassment. No employee, volunteer or student associated with these programs shall be subjected to any type of harassment.
- B. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee, staff member, volunteer, parent, or student to harass another employee, staff member, volunteer, parent, or student through conduct or communications as defined in Section II below.
- C. Each administrator shall be responsible for promoting understanding and acceptance of and assuring compliance with local, state, and federal laws and school policy and procedures governing harassment within his or her educational program or office.
- D. Violations of this policy or procedures will be cause for disciplinary action.

## II. DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

- A. Harassment on the basis of race, color, age, religion, sex, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, and disability constitutes discrimination and, as such, violates civil law and the policies of the school.
- B. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, age, religion, sex, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, or disability, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates, and that:
  - 1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment;
  - 2. has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance;
  - or
  - 3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's opportunities.
- C. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - 1. epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, that relate to race, color, age, religion, gender, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry
  - 2. written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability and that is circulated within or placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on premises where the educational program operates.
- D. The standard for determining whether verbal or physical conduct relating to race, color, religion, sex, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, or disability is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile or abusive environment is whether a reasonable student or person in the same or similar circumstances would find the conduct intimidating, hostile, or abusive. The "reasonable person" standard includes consideration of the

perspective of persons of the alleged victim's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability. It is not necessary to make a showing that the victim was psychologically harmed.

- E. Prevention is the best tool for the elimination of harassment. Walnut Farm Montessori School embraces and practices anti-bias curriculum and peace education as a natural element in our accredited Montessori education.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

- A. Any person who alleges harassment by an employee, volunteer, or student files a complaint in writing directly to his or her teacher, immediate supervisor, or Head of School. The complaint shall describe the perceived violation, name the perpetrator, and identify any potential witnesses to the incident.
- B. The filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting of sexual harassment will not reflect upon the filing individual's status, nor will it affect future employment or work assignments. Retaliation against a complainant is strictly prohibited.
- C. The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred. If the allegation is one of sexual misconduct, the school policy on sexual misconduct will be followed.

### **VI. SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY OR TOWARD SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

For employees, sexual harassment is defined as illegal sex discrimination and includes unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature which meets any one of the following criteria:

- A. Submission to the conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment status or promotion
- B. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the harassed employee
- C. The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment
- D. Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct is the basis for any decision affecting benefits, services, honors, programs or other available activities.

### **V. HARASSMENT BY OR TOWARD STUDENTS**

Sexual harassment toward students is defined as including, but not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual conduct or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward a student under any of the following conditions:

- A. Submission to or toleration of sexual conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of any services, benefits, or programs sponsored by the school
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an academic evaluation affecting a student

- C. The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

## VI. EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to the following forms:

- Verbal: Sexually demeaning comments, sexual statements, questions, slurs, jokes, anecdotes, or epithets
- Written: Suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails, or invitations
- Physical: Sexual assault, touching, impeding or blocking movement
- Visual: Leering gestures, display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters

## VII. SANCTIONS

- A. A substantiated charge against an employee or volunteer shall subject such employee or volunteer to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.
- B. A substantiated charge against a student of the school shall subject that student to disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion, consistent with the student discipline code.

## VIII. NOTIFICATIONS

Notice of this policy and procedures will be circulated throughout the school and incorporated in faculty and community guides. Training sessions on this policy and the prevention of harassment shall be held for employees.

## Illness

WFMS abides by state regulated standards in order to keep all our children, their families and staff members as healthy as possible. We require that you observe the following:

- If your child has a fever of 99.0 or above, keep him or her home for 24 hours after the fever has broken. Viruses are still active within a 24-hour period.
- If your child has a bout of diarrhea or vomiting, keep him or her home for 24 hours after the last incident. Again, this 24-hour period is a highly contagious one.
- If your child has a runny nose, please be aware of the following:
  - A clear discharge without any other symptoms indicates an allergic reaction. This is not a contagious condition. A clear discharge with fever and or irritability indicates a contagious condition.
  - A discolored discharge indicates an infection and is a contagious condition. A sinus or ear infection may be present, and medication and bed rest may be necessary to clear up the infection. Please keep your child home until the infection is cleared.
- Staff members reserve the right to not allow a child they believe has a contagious condition into

the classroom. If your child has a vomiting incident at school, you will be asked to pick them up. If your child has more than two diarrhea incidents at school and/or is experiencing other symptoms, you will be asked to pick them up.

We realize this might create an inconvenience for you. We have the health of our children and their families at heart, and feel a strong responsibility to do what we can to protect our WFMS school community.

## **Immunization Requirements**

Health records are due when you enroll your child. Children without current immunization will not be admitted to class until they are updated. If in doubt, please consult your child's physician.

## **Inclement Weather/Snow Days**

If Bentonville **or** Rogers's schools are closed, Walnut Farm will also be closed. We will also announce on TV channel 24/51 (NBC). While we are not required by the state of Arkansas to offer make up days, our calendar has designated make up days for excessive academic days lost. Extenuating circumstances are left to the discretion of the Head of School.

## **Insurance**

WFMS carries the appropriate liability insurance as mandated by Arkansas Insurance guidelines. WFMS' liability insurance policy covers the staff and students enrolled at WFMS and may not extend to other children and adults (non-students) using the facilities. The liability insurance policy may not cover any or all incidences for which said insurance is used. Further, WFMS liability insurance policy may not cover the full amount of any claims and/or incidences for which said insurance is used.

## **Internet**

WFMS utilizes internet blocking and filtering software on all computers at the school to protect the students from exposure to inappropriate material. These filters are not fool-proof, but the best protection available. WFMS will not be held responsible for accidental or intentional misuse of the internet and resultant exposure to pictures, literature or other material deemed inappropriate for children.

## **Library**

We are fortunate to have a children's libraries to offer our primary and elementary students. Parent volunteers assist our students one day a week in the library. Students are able to have story time and check out a book of their choice. We ask for books to be returned in a timely manner: one week from the time of check out. Please note the overdue library book policy:

1. If a book is not returned within 1, 2, or 3 weeks a notice is given to the parent during morning or afternoon carline.
2. If a book is not returned within 1 month (4 weeks) of the due date, the parents will be charged a book replacement fee of \$15.00.

## Library Volunteer Expectations

1. We always use quiet voices. If we are loud the children will be loud too.
2. We use walking feet. Running in the school is not only dangerous behavior, but also, it is disruptive behavior. The children should be walking in a tight line with their hands behind their backs.
3. Gum, food, candy and drinks are not allowed for adults or children during library hours.
4. Each teacher's expectations are a little different when it comes to gathering a group of children to take to the library. **Please confer with your teacher as to what his/her expectations are in the classroom.** No matter what the expectations, we always use a quiet whisper voice so as not to disturb the classroom. Once again, if you are using a normal/loud voice so will the children.

## Lice Policy

It is expected that school age children may get head lice. Lice are not something to be ashamed of and it can affect all people regardless of cleanliness or socio economic background. One of the worst problems with head lice is the attitude of the adults. Please understand that lice are not life threatening, it is an inconvenience. At Walnut Farm, we will do our best to keep head lice under control. Our school policy and plan is based on a 2001 study from *Pediatrics-Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*.

- If you find nits or live lice on your child, please inform the school. It is likely that if your child has lice another child will also have lice.
- You should examine your child's head, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck, for nits and lice if your child exhibits symptoms (primarily itching) of a head lice infestation. If nits or lice are found, all household members should be examined for nits and lice every 2-3 days. Persons with live (crawling) lice or nits within 1/4 inch or less of the scalp should be treated.
- If head lice are found, the school will perform head checks in the classroom where a confirmed case of head lice has been reported.
- If the school finds > 5 nits within ¼ inch of the scalp or a live louse, we will call you to pick up your child and treat them. Treatment may or may not involve chemicals but it **must** involve the removal of live lice and nits. (Please see hand out on how to treat lice)
- Eggs that are likely to hatch are usually located no more than ¼ inch (or 1 centimeter) from the base of the hair shaft.
- We expect you to **retreat** your child in 7 to 10 days.



- The child or staff member will be checked on a daily basis for 7-10 days to ensure no signs of re-infestation develop.
- When a child or staff member is identified as having head lice, everyone in the classroom, including the teacher, will be checked weekly for four weeks.
- A notice will be sent home to notify and make parents aware that they need to check their child daily for four weeks to make sure that they do not develop signs of an infestation.
- Upon completion of treatment, authorized school staff will check the child. The student or staff member will be granted re-admission to the school if no live lice or less than 5 nits within ¼ inch of the scalp are found.
- To eliminate head lice successfully, it is very important that all treatment instructions and steps are carefully followed and completed.
- CDC does not make recommendations as to what specific product or products should be used to treat individual patients. You may wish to contact your doctor, pharmacist, or health department for additional information about which product has been successful for treating lice.

We take head lice very seriously, but please understand that treatment and the eradication of head lice are fully the responsibility of the parent. We will do our best to keep you informed, maintain the classroom, and to educate the children.

## Lunches

Lunch costs are included in our elementary, primary, and toddler full day programs. Lunch may not be brought from home unless extreme, special health conditions exist and the change has received approval by the Head of School. We will offer a main dish, fresh fruits, and vegetables each day along with 2% milk and water. A monthly menu is available on our website; [walnutfarmmontessori.com](http://walnutfarmmontessori.com).

**Elementary students only**, may opt out of our lunch program on a semester basis. If your student opts out of the school provided lunch, please follow the guide lines above and send a healthy, nutritious lunch. Sweet treats are not allowed and will be sent home. Milk and water will be provided.

We welcome parents to join us for lunch. It is necessary to schedule a lunch visit a day or two ahead, as we limit lunch guests to no more than 2 per day. Sometimes we can accommodate impromptu lunch visits; however, we greatly appreciate a call by 9 a.m. so we can alert our cook and set a place for you. Please check with your classroom teacher for the exact lunchtime.

Any time parents are visiting our campus, please remember that the work of the children and the teachers' and other staff members' attention should not be disturbed. Parents should walk and speak quietly at all times. **We ask that parents try to limit their stay to a period of 30 minutes while on the campus for lunch or classroom celebrations.** Lengthy visits can disturb the focus of the children and teachers during class and play times.

## Medication

**WFMS does not administer over the counter or prescription medication. If medication is necessary, a parent will need to come to the school to provide their child with necessary medication.**

The only exception will be emergency medications such as EPI-Pens and inhalers. All Epi-pens and inhalers must come with a doctor's instruction for use as well a permission slip provided by WFMS. The permission slip will need to be completed and put in a zip lock back with the Epi-pen or inhaler and the doctor's instruction. These items should be given directly to the child's teacher. Parents will be responsible for keeping track of expiration dates.

### ***Sunscreen and Lip Balm***

Sunscreen, lip balm and insect repellent are treated as medications. Therefore, we kindly ask that you apply these products at home before your child gets dressed as necessary. **All sunscreen must be in spray form only for the body and stick form for the face.** If a child needs sunscreen, lip balm or insect repellent application to be applied at school, a permission slip provided by WFMS will need to be completed and put in a zip lock back with the sunscreen or lip balm and given to a morning greeter.

## Newsletters

Newsletters from the school and teachers will be made available through email.

## Normalization

Normalization is the first 6 to 8 weeks of school when we are getting to know your children, and they are learning the expectations of the classroom. Here is a list of things that you can do to help your child in this process:

1. Make sure your child gets to bed early.
2. Make sure your child has ample time in the morning to prepare for the day.
3. Make sure your child has a healthy diet.
4. Try to eliminate your anxiety and stress about the new situation.
5. Make positive conversation about school with your child.
6. Try to choose clothing the night before and make sure the clothing choice makes toileting free of extra challenges.
7. Make sure your child has some time after school to just be.

## Observation of Classrooms

Observation is an important aspect of the Montessori classroom and profession. Observation is a privilege that Walnut Farm offers to its families to view their child in the context of their education and social environments. Observations are scheduled after the first 6-8 weeks of school. Parents are welcome to observe our classrooms. All of our classrooms have observation rooms that make

observations less intrusive. We suggest that you limit your observations to no more than once a month. Please use the following protocol if you wish to observe:

All observations must be scheduled with the administration office.

The observation windows are limited to one family (not to exceed two people) and a staff member at a time.

If staff members are in the observation room, please allow them to exit before entering.

**The use of cell phones, cameras or video equipment in the observation IS NOT ALLOWED. Parents are not ALLOWED to take photos or videos of children and/or staff unless they have received the expressed permission from the Head of School. All observations will be scheduled so that a Montessori teacher or the Head of School can provide a guided observation.**

### How to Observe the Montessori Classroom

- Note the variety of activities offered in the environment.
- Observe your child closely.
- Is your child working alone or with other students?
- Is your child choosing to sit on a rug or at a worktable?
- Note your child's cycle of work from beginning to end.
- Is your child concentrating?
- Is your child demonstrating a sense of order while working?
- What are the expressions on your child's face?

Please plan to spend between 30 minutes and 1 hour when you come to observe primary or elementary students so that you will get a better understanding of the workings of the classroom. Toddler observations are limited to 30 minutes. **Please fill out one of the observation forms located in each observation room during each visit and return the completed form to the administrator.**

**Please do not enter a classroom during class time unless you have the teacher's permission.**

### Practical Life Environment

- Activities such as sewing buttons, ironing, gardening, hiking, cutting vegetables, preparing food, and using glass dishware and materials is a vital part of the learning experience in a Montessori classroom and lessons are given under the supervision of the teacher or assistant.
- Classrooms at WFMS sometimes have small animals as part of their curriculum. These may include but are not limited to: Gerbils, rabbits, pigs, birds, tarantulas, hermit crabs, fish, guinea pigs, sheep, pygmy goats, turtles, dogs, cats, etc. These are for the benefit of the children to learn to care for pets, as well as to aid in Zoological studies. Students will participate in the care of these animals unless there is a specific medical reason that precludes his/her participation.

- Walnut Farm works hard to create a realistic natural outdoor environment. We do our best to minimize the number of natural hazards associated with natural environments. However, a true natural setting at times may have risk. This is a vital part of the Montessori experience. Students will participate in the activities and use the materials provided in the outdoor environment.

## Confidentiality

During your observation you will observe a variety of behaviors and maturity levels. Please be aware that as a school, we respect each child's place in their individual development and respect our staff's expertise in handling situations that may occur during your observation. Please be respectful of the children, their families, and the staff if you share your observations with a friend.

\*If there is a special concern or reason for frequent observations, a conference with your classroom teacher and/or Head of School is required.

\*\*WFMS reserves the right to prohibit observations if the privilege of observation is misused.

## Outdoor Classroom

The Outdoor classroom is the patio and outdoor area directly behind the primary building. This area is an extension of our classes. The same rules for the classroom apply here also: walking feet and quiet voices. The large playground will be used for running and game playing. Please provide a pair of rubber boots marked with your child's name. These boots should stay at school so the outdoor classroom can be enjoyed even on the muddiest of days.

## Parent Education Meeting and Requirements

Our Parent Education Meetings are vital to your child's success and therefore we **expect parents to attend at least two meetings per year, but we recommend attending as many as possible**. We try to make the meetings brief and highly informative. We think you will find it a wise investment your time. Please check the school calendar for dates and times. Meetings sometimes vary according to developmental levels and themes.

Our school is a partnership of teachers, parents and students. It is through these meetings that our partnership becomes most effective.

## Parking

Parking at the school is very limited. Please park in the spaces first and then use the grassy area across from the toddler A building.

## Ratios: Student to Staff per DHS Guidelines

**Toddler Students: (18 months-3 years) There must be 1 staff member for every 8 students.**

**Primary Students: (3 years-6 years) There must be 1 staff member for every 12 students when 3 year olds are present There must be 1 staff member for every 15 students when 4, 5, or 6 year olds are present.**

**Primary Resting Time: The staff can reduce to 50% (from 2 to 1) when primary students are resting.**

## Recall Notice and Web Link

From time to time, companies that provide equipment, materials, and toys for children will “recall” particular items in their product line. As required by DHS, we have included a web address for all WFMS parents to utilize to discover if equipment, materials, or toys their child/children are using has been recalled. The web address is: [listserv@cpsc.gov](mailto:listserv@cpsc.gov). Additionally, upon request, WFMS can provide a printed copy of recent recalled children’s items.

## Snacks

In the Toddler and Primary classrooms, snack time is a free choice activity beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 10:00 a.m. Parents will provide snacks. Please make sure snack is given to the morning greeter. Teachers will provide you with a calendar of assigned snack days. Please make sure that snacks are nutritious: a whole grain carbohydrate, protein, fruit or vegetable. A list of appropriate snacks to choose from will be handed out during the orientation and the first day of school. Snack is also offered in the elementary classrooms and schedules are provided.

**Due to DHS regulations, snacks MUST BE purchased at a store and not prepared at home. Fruit and vegetables are welcomed and must be brought to school in their original container/bag from the store.**

## Staggered Start

To ensure that each of our new toddler and primary students have a successful beginning to the school year we offer a staggered start. If your child is new to the toddler program, new to the primary program, or a WFMS toddler transitioning to the primary program, your child will experience a stagger start. You will receive a letter stating which day (during the first 10 days of the new school year) your child will begin attending. This allows the teachers to give each child the special attention he or she needs while transitioning from time at home to the school environment.

## Statement of Rights

Walnut Farm Montessori School, Head of School, and the Board of Trustees retain the right to change, modify, cancel, suspend or interpret any part of the Community Handbook, policies and practices

without advance notice within the sole discretion and without statement of cause for justification. All decisions made will be in the best interest of the children, school, and parents. Parents will be notified thru mail or newsletter.

## **Tax ID Number**

Our tax ID number is 71-0828503.

## **Toys**

The children are here for only a short time, and a toy from home can keep them from their work. Please encourage any "lovies" to stay at home or in the car. If a blanket or 'lovey' is needed for rest time it must be small enough to fit in your child's school bag.

For elementary students, balls, jump ropes, etc. may be brought from home at the discretion of the teacher and with the expectation that they will be shared.

## **Transitions and Classroom Placements**

Our goal is for each student to remain in the same classroom for the three-year cycle of that program. However, this is not always possible. Dr. Montessori discovered three-year cycles of human development with marked changes at the end and beginning of each. As trained teachers, we look for these changes and help guide the child into the next level of development.

If a child is not already a full day student, the transition from half day to full day usually occurs around age four and a half to five years old. Usually, your child will ask to stay all day to do "Big Work." We usually recommend staying two or three consecutive afternoons a week until your child feels comfortable with the transition. This transition will occur under the advice and communication of the classroom guide and/or Head of School. This transition time does require a fee. You will be billed on a monthly basis.

The transition from primary to the elementary classroom occurs around age six. Usually a three year cycle in the primary environment prepares the child for the next stage of development in the lower elementary. Your child will usually express a desire to leave the comfort of being the oldest in the primary classroom, to the challenge of being the youngest in the elementary classroom.

Please be aware that once your child transitions you will be billed for the additional fees.

New primary students are introduced into the classroom with staggered starts. Their start times are scheduled through mutual agreement between the teacher and parents. The dates will fall after the first day of returning students. This is to ensure your child has a comfortable and successful start to the school year.

Elementary students may begin with a staggered start. Start dates are based on the number of years a child has been in the classroom. Your teacher will contact you to confirm your start date.

## Truth in Advertising Policy

Walnut Farm Montessori School states that the information contained in our advertising, community guide, faculty guide, newsletters, and school communication is true to the best of our knowledge. We reserve the right to amend the community and faculty guides as needed to suit the needs of the school community.

## Visitors/Volunteers Policy

All parents and guest visiting/volunteering at WFMS are required to first check in at the administrative office before proceeding to their destination on campus. Visitors are required to sign the visitor's log and acquire a visitor's badge that must be worn at all times while on campus. Visitors must sign out in the administrative office and return their badge after they have finished their business on campus. Sign-in is not required for PA or board meetings, social gatherings sponsored by the school such as school celebrations or community events.

Parents have access to WFMS anytime during school hours. However, the work of the children and the teachers and other staff members' attention should not be disturbed. Parents should walk and speak quietly at all times. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please call the administrative office to make an appointment. Parents are allowed to stay for a period of 30 minutes in the classroom while on campus for lunch or birthday celebrations. Longer visits must be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher.

## Volunteerism

**Each WFMS family is required to give 10 volunteer hours per school year. Please make sure you sign-in our volunteer book as well as sign-in to receive a guest badge.**

There are many opportunities to volunteer at the school throughout the year, including volunteering with a fundraiser, driving on field trips, making materials, helping with fundraisers, running errands, helping set up for meetings, working in the library, purchasing pet supplies (1 volunteer hour for every \$20.00 spent) or making phone calls, or helping with facility and grounds updates and repairs.

**Parents are not allowed in the classrooms during class time unless arrangements have been made with the teacher. Always check in with the office before you enter a classroom.**

**All parents and caregivers of children enrolled in Walnut Farm Montessori are members of the Parent Association.** Everyone is welcome and encouraged to support WFMS by participating in events and volunteer opportunities offered by the PA.

**Walnut Farm Montessori School reserves the right to amend and change policy as needed to ensure and protect the mission of the school.**

*The contents of this booklet can be revised at any time and are not to be construed as a contract, but rather, guidelines for action. These contents are the property of Walnut Farm Montessori School and cannot be duplicated or copied without their permission.*

Updated 8/1/2020