



**Walnut Farm**  
**Montessori School**

# **Community Guide**

2024-2025

Dear Walnut Farm Families,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2024-2025 school-year!

Excitement is building as we begin moving into our new spaces. This year offers much to be thankful for including additional facilities, a larger student body, and our preparations for re-accreditation. The opening of our new offices and conference room will provide a more welcoming experience for our adult guest, as well as free up more space for therapists and staff. The new Primary classroom and Upper Elementary class allow us to welcome more 3-6-year-old students and complete our goal of offering an upper elementary experience for our students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This year, we also begin our self-study for our reaccreditation with the American Montessori Society. We plan to submit our self-study report in May of 2025 and host an AMS accreditation visiting team in the fall of 2025 for re-accreditation in early 2026.

Though much of our campus was damaged during the storm on May 26<sup>th</sup> with many trees lost, we remain grateful that our buildings only sustained minor damage. Our Primary outdoor classroom, fences and out buildings are being repaired, and our playgrounds are beginning to look back to normal again. It will take time for our tree canopy to recover, but we feel so grateful for the amazing community support and that we still have a beautiful campus!

Looking ahead, we are excited to offer a variety of education opportunities for your family and others who care for your child(ren), including our popular Silent Journey, an immersive, two day, hands on learning experience that will provide further insight into what makes Montessori education so amazing. We also look forward to offering Lunch and Learns on various topics related to caring for young children, Monthly morning coffees with members of our board of trustees and me, and the return of our Grand-friends Day in the spring of 2025!

More ways to be involved at school include our fall and spring Campus Clean-ups where whole families come out to further beautify our campus, Discovery Nights each semester; a special time for children to host their family in their classroom and show them the lessons they have learned and love, and our Annual Fundraising event, Fall Festival! Our Family Association is already working hard to prepare for an exciting year of community building and support for our school. Please look for more communication about these and other events through the teachers' weekly emails, my monthly newsletters, communication from our Director of Development, Amanda, and our Family Association.

Thank you for choosing Walnut Farm Montessori School to foster your child's life-long learning journey. It is an honor to be a part of this important time in your child's development and our staff take this honor seriously. We continue to embark on life-long learning ourselves as we work on our self-study report for AMS this year. I look forward to partnering with each of you in the coming year and beyond.

*"The education of even a small child, therefore, does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life"*  
Dr. MARIA MONTESSORI

In Partnership,

Lynette Goss  
Head of School  
Walnut Farm Montessori School



11/5/2024

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# History and Structure

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## About the Montessori Method



Over 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*

## History of Our School

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 30 years. Since its construction student enrollment has doubled in size, from less than 50 to over 100.

In March 2010, Walnut Farm Montessori School became the first accredited Montessori school in the state of Arkansas through the American Montessori Society. In 2013, the Board of Trustees purchased the school's north building for our elementary program, 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 and in 2022 the elementary program increased to two lower elementary classrooms. Our most recent physical growth included the addition of a new administrative space, conference room and fourth primary classroom and the reopening of an upper elementary program in 2024.

Through over 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 continues the work necessary to keep full accreditation by the American Montessori Society. 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.” -Quote contributed to Margaret Mead***

## Mission Statement

**The nationally accredited Walnut Farm Montessori school offers children a Montessori education honoring individuality, authenticity and the natural world. We promote peace and equity, empowering and inspiring all for life-long learning.**

## 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:

Lina Scroggins: President, Emma Pengelly: Vice President, Janna White: Secretary,  
Sean D'Hoostelaere: Treasurer, Chi Ibekwe, Tabitha Tichenor-Turner, Stephen Pauzer, Nikki Tallman, Callie Wohletz, Heather Incao, Justin Meeks, Clint Schaff, and Hunter Haynes

## Faculty and Staff

### Administration:

Head of School: Lynette Goss, [lynette@walnutfarm.org](mailto:lynette@walnutfarm.org)

Financial Administrator: Heather Shakespeare, [heather@walnutfarm.org](mailto:heather@walnutfarm.org)

Education Administrator: Azusa Crawford, [azusa@walnutfarm.org](mailto:azusa@walnutfarm.org)

Admissions Administrator: Michelle Garcia-Martinez, [michelle@walnutfarm.org](mailto:michelle@walnutfarm.org)

Director of Development: Amanda Phillips, [amanda@walnutfarm.org](mailto:amanda@walnutfarm.org)

Administrative Assistant: James Vanblaricom, [james@walnutfarm.org](mailto:james@walnutfarm.org)

### Classrooms:

**Juniper Toddler Classroom:** Whitney Kimbro: [Tjuniper@walnutfarm.org](mailto:Tjuniper@walnutfarm.org) and assistant, Sara Tway

**Cedar Toddler Classroom:** Koraly's Vallejo: [Tcedar@walnutfarm.org](mailto:Tcedar@walnutfarm.org) and assistant, Melissa Friefeld

**Red Bud Primary Classroom:** Jennifer Crosby: [Predbud@walnutfarm.org](mailto:Predbud@walnutfarm.org) and assistant, Brandy Wilson

**Dogwood Primary Classroom:** Stephanie Throop: [Pdogwood@walnutfarm.org](mailto:Pdogwood@walnutfarm.org) and assistant, Emely Aguirre

**Magnolia Primary Classroom:** Jamie Van Horn: [Pmagnolia@walnutfarm.org](mailto:Pmagnolia@walnutfarm.org) and assistant, Kristal Price

**Persimmon Primary Classroom:** Paige Kemp: [PPersimmon@walnutfarm.org](mailto:PPersimmon@walnutfarm.org) and intern, Elly Elliott

**Sycamore Lower Elementary Classroom:** Briana Cooper and Sally Davis: [ELsycamore@walnutfarm.org](mailto:ELsycamore@walnutfarm.org), and morning assistant, Kerrey Klatt

**Walnut Upper Elementary Classroom:** Jill Bauer: [ELwalnut@walnutfarm.org](mailto:ELwalnut@walnutfarm.org)

**Outdoor Classroom Lead:** Joe Love, [outdoorclass@walnutfarm.org](mailto:outdoorclass@walnutfarm.org)

## Enrichment and support staff:

### Toddler

Outdoor Classroom and Support: Woody Wallace

Spanish: Koralys Vallejo

Music: Briana Cooper

### Primary

Outdoor Classroom: Autumn Wisniewski and assistant, Woody Wallace

Spanish: Michelle Garcia-Martinez

Music: Briana Cooper

Art: Kerrey Klatt

### Elementary

Spanish: Koralys Vallejo

Music: Briana Cooper

Art: Kerrey Klatt

PE and Outdoor Classroom: Joe Love

### All Levels

Aftercare and Summer Coordinator: Kerrey Klatt, [aftercare@walnutfarm.org](mailto:aftercare@walnutfarm.org)

Support: Danielle Tasker

Aftercare: Emely Aguirre, Clancey Wood, Alli Fosse, Sierra Allen, Woody Wallace and Jasmine Campbell

## 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.

## **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 through mail or newsletter.

## **Tax ID Number**

Our tax ID number is 71-0828503.

## **Arkansas Department of Human Services**

### **Facility Compliance and Better Beginnings**

Walnut Farm Montessori School is visited by members of DHS twice per year to ensure the school follows state regulations. To see the school's Facility's Compliance Forms, please visit: [Arkansas Child Care Information](#)

WFMS is a four-star Better Beginnings program. WFMS qualifies as a six-star rating in all areas with the exception of ratio requirements by the state. This is a conscious choice made by the school in order to follow best practices in a Montessori program of mixed age ranges and highest sense of independence for our students. Please see page 31 for ratio requirements.

### **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/dcece/classroom\\_docs/DHS\\_RICalendar.pdf](http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dcece/classroom_docs/DHS_RICalendar.pdf)) to all families who are enrolled in our program.

### **Website and Social Media**

[www.walnutfarmmontessori.com](http://www.walnutfarmmontessori.com), <https://www.facebook.com/WalnutFarm>, [Walnut Farm FA Facebook Page](#) You can also find us on Instagram and LinkedIn



# Policies and Procedures

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## Enrollment Policies and Procedures

### Eligibility

Our toddler community is available to children ages 18 months to 3 years. DHS requires a child to be 18 months old before they may enter our program and not older than 36 months before the first day of the school year.

Primary classrooms are open to all children between the ages of 3-6 years. 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 classrooms are open to children between the ages of 6-12 years. For elementary enrollment information, please refer to our admissions procedures.

The needs of the child will be of primary importance in every decision made. 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 consider our ability to accommodate particular student's learning needs without disruption to our program as one factor when evaluating applicants. Students with learning differences that fall within our ability to address may be accepted provisionally, with additional stipulations (such as a requirement for specialized and/or therapist assistance).

### Admission Procedure

Choosing a school that is right for your family is a process that takes time. We recommend that families do the following:

- a) Check our school website at: <https://walnutfarmmontessori.com/>, click Prospective Families, then [Admissions](#).
- b) Attend a virtual tour and tour our building and classrooms, preferably while classes are in session
- c) Submit the WFMS application/questionnaire along with the application fee, child's immunization records and a photo of your child
- d) Complete a student visit session
- e) The school will contact a family when a space is available
- f) Families complete the enrollment contract

Prior to admittance into our program, all children must be registered by a parent or legal guardian. Application/questionnaire for prospective students are offered after touring the school.

The following documents are needed for enrollment:

- a) Application/questionnaire form
- b) Photo of child

- c) Current immunization records
- d) Application fee of \$125.00 (non-refundable and non-transferrable)
- e) Enrollment fees apply after acceptance into the program (non-refundable and non-transferable). Please refer to our tuition information for more details.

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 consider evidence of a student's engagement, the family's long-term commitment to Montessori, 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. 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:

### **Toddler**

- Shows respect for others appropriate for a toddler's development
- Developmentally functional in all aspects of daily school routines for toddlers

### **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. First preference is given to families already in attendance at WFMS. Pre-registration (Re-Enrollment) for children currently enrolled in the program is in February. To secure your enrollment for the next school year, we must have a contract signed by the end of the designated re-enrollment period. Enrollment typically opens to the community in mid-March.

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.

## Family Partnership Agreement

Each family enrolled at WFMS is required to review and sign a Family/ School agreement when submitting their enrollment contract. The agreement includes the following:

### What you can expect from Walnut Farm

- Each child is recognized as a unique individual whom deserves the upmost respect. Our focus is on the formation of the whole child where expression of individuality is encouraged.
- We strive for children to challenge themselves by choosing developmentally appropriate work. There is an encouragement of a healthy struggle. This promotes development of self-confidence and a drive for intrinsic motivation.
- We will work diligently to share growth, positive happenings, concerns or anything else families should be aware of. All communication will be dealt with in a positive and timely manner.
- Observing, Transparent Classroom, Progress Reports, and Elementary testing are all ways we use to track the development of your child.
- Each classroom will provide an authentic Montessori education and tailor to the needs of the students. Through frequent observation, adults are able to understand and get to know your child on a personal level.

### What we expect of families

- Devote effort and eagerness to learn about Montessori education by attending parent education opportunities, parent-teacher conferences, and reading school emails.
- Read and refer to the community guide regarding school policies.

- Implement Montessori practices at home and encourage independence. Allowing even the youngest child to help with household tasks and dress/undress themselves is setting them up for success.
- Punctuality and keeping absences to a minimum is expected and ensures your child is available to learn. This allows for developmental progression and protection of the work cycle.
- Conflicts should be resolved in a respectful and peaceful manner directly with whom is involved.
- Refrain from gossiping and communicate any school concerns to the head of school.
- Required documents are submitted in timely manner (updating student information, immunizations or exemptions).
- Communicate concerns regarding your child or significant events in their life to their lead teacher.

## 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 and materials fee of \$450.00.

### Tuition Fees for Academic Year 2024-2025

Program	*Tuition paid in full	**Monthly Payment Plan (10 payments)
Elementary 8:00 to 3:00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$9,940.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,004.00 (\$10,040.00) Tuition Insurance: \$402.00
Primary Half Day 8:00 to 11:30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$8,025.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$812.50 (\$8,125.00) Tuition insurance: \$325.00
Primary Full Day 8:00 to 3:00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$9,490.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$959.00 (\$9,590.00) Tuition Insurance: \$384.00
Toddler Half Day 8:00 to 11:15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$8,180.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$828.00 (\$8,280.00) Tuition insurance: \$331.00
Toddler Full Day 8:00 to 3:00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$9,815.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$991.50 (\$9,915.00) Tuition insurance: \$397.00

### 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 when 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 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. Current families may apply online during January and early

February to be considered for the following school year. Prospective families may also apply. For more information, contact the school administration.

### *Educational Freedom Accounts (EFA)*

Eligible families may choose to register for EFAs to support WFMS tuition. This registration of WFMS for EFAs will be decided on a year-to-year basis and should not be considered an endorsement of the LEARNS Act on the part of Walnut Farm Montessori School. The school's participation in EFA's will be evaluated on a yearly basis. Continued participation will occur as long as our mission and accreditation with AMS, which includes being an inclusive and safe community for all are not compromised in order to participate.

- This year the EFAs are offered to kindergarten and first grade students, students with some diagnosis of learning differences, and some other limited eligibility. Plans to offer EFAs to all K-12 students are scheduled for next year in 2025-2026. To learn more or see if your family is eligible, visit: [Division of Elementary and Secondary Education - Offices - School Choice & Parent Empowerment - Education Freedom Accounts \(arkansas.gov\)](https://arkansas.gov/division-of-elementary-and-secondary-education-offices-school-choice-parent-empowerment-education-freedom-accounts)

### *Probationary Enrollment*

New students are accepted into WFMS on an 8-calendar week probationary period beginning with the student's first day of classes. **Parents/guardians will receive frequent verbal reports from their child's teacher regarding adjustment to the classroom environment.** Any behavior disruptive to the classroom's successful workings will be reported to parents/guardians, and recommendations will be made on how to help a 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/guardians to develop a home/school strategy to promote success. Further, we strongly recommend that parents/guardians 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/guardians to cooperate with the school's policies
- Failure by the parents/guardians to provide health forms and other paperwork required for enrollment by law
- Excessive biting
- Uncontrolled hitting
- Behavioral problems that are disruptive to the classroom atmosphere and other students
- Parent/guardian'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 and Education Administrator consensus
- Parent/guardian's disrespectful behavior toward other parents, guardians, children, teachers, administrators or any other staff
- Physical, academic, or emotional issues that require excessive one-on-one attention

## Absences

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

The experience of travel and several cultures is important. 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, this is especially true for elementary students. If teachers determine that a child's academic or social-emotional progress has been jeopardized, it may require extra conferencing and additional support from parents outside of class time.**

## Before and After School Care

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.

### Early Morning Care

**Early Morning Care from 7:15 a.m. to 7:35 a.m. All children will be cared for in the Toddler Cedar building. All children must be signed in.**

### After School Care

**After school care is offered daily from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. This program allows children to remain at WFMS and enjoy a snack and supervised time with other students until parents/guardians arrive. All children must be signed out before leaving.**

**Parents/guardians are asked to arrive no later than 5:30 p.m. as the school closes each evening at this time. If a child has not been picked up by 5:35 p.m. the parent will be charged a \$30.00 late fee.** If the parent is late picking up a child more than 3 times, WFMS reserves the right to remove the child from the program.

#### After School Care details:

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. – 5:30 p.m.	\$2595.00	\$259.50

- **Toddler** children are cared for in the Toddler Cedar building and may be picked up by ringing the bell on the fence.

- **Primary** children are cared for in Primary Dogwood classroom and may be picked up by ringing the aftercare doorbell at the South entrance of the primary building.
  - **Elementary** children are cared for in the Primary Magnolia classroom and may be picked up by ringing the aftercare doorbell at the South entrance of the primary building.
1. Parents/guardians may contact the aftercare staff during the aftercare program hours (3:00 p.m.- 5:30 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. 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 \$25 per day. Payment must be made prior to the drop-in date to ensure availability.
  5. 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 and we request a two-week notice.
  6. Parents/guardians should be aware of local weather conditions and arrange to pick-up their child early from aftercare if severe weather threatens the Bentonville area.

## Drop-in for Before and After School Care

On occasion there are openings for drop-in care. There is a \$10 fee for early morning care and a \$25.00 fee for each afternoon drop-in session. The afternoon session is 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **The \$25.00 fee is charged for each session regardless of 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 a child to attend drop-in care. Please contact the administration office if you are interested in these services.

## 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.

### Arrival Procedure

To allow a safe and smooth transition for your child and others, please respect the following guidelines while in the car line:

- **Get in hugs and kisses before entering 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 5 mph in our car line and parking areas.***

- **Students must remain INSIDE the vehicle until a greeter opens the door. For your child's safety, please do not allow your child to stand out of the sunroof of your vehicle or extend any part of their body out of the windows while waiting to be greeted.**
- **Student's bag is close to them and ready for them or the greeter to take from the vehicle.**

Doors open at 7:40 a.m. Our staff will approach your vehicle, greet you and your child, ask you to sign-in to Transparent Classroom, and escort your child into the building from 7:40 a.m. until 8:00 a.m.

**Toddler:** Please keep your child buckled. The greeter will ask you to sign your child in Transparent Classroom, greet and unbuckle your child.

**Primary:** Please have your child unbuckled before the greeter opens your vehicle door. The greeter will ask you to sign your child in through Transparent Classroom and greet your child.

**Elementary:** Students should unbuckle themselves and have backpack and personal belongings ready before the greeter approaches the vehicle.

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 and function, 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 is properly greeted by their teacher and has a full three-hour work cycle. **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 by a short amount of time. Instead, please only contact our office if your child will be late due to a doctor's appointment or absent for the day.** Being notified of an absence will help our staff properly plan each classroom's activities. Additionally, parents/guardians 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.** A few minutes each day quickly adds up over each week and over the year. Being on time not only allows your child a proper transition, but also provides the full care you are paying for. We are happy to provide advice and support on how to get children out the door on time!

- **All families arriving after 8:00 am must park and escort their child to the main office where they will be greeted by an administrator and asked to sign the tardy log.**
  - Late arrivals due to important appointments will be waived with a doctor's note.
- If your family is tardy three times in a semester, the head of school will reach out to set up a time to discuss this issue and how the school and family may partner to ensure it does not continue.



- If a family continues to be tardy after meeting with the head of school, a late fee of \$25.00 will be billed to the family for each late arrival that semester.

## Dismissal Procedure

### *Toddler*

**The half-day Toddler program dismisses at 11:15 a.m. Toddler classrooms will dismiss from the playground.** Parents/guardians should park and walk to the gate facing the main driveway between the classrooms. **If weather does not permit outside time, please ring the bell on the Toddler fence.**

**The Full-day Toddler program dismisses at 2:55 p.m. Toddler classrooms will dismiss from the playground.** Parents/guardians should park and walk to the gate facing the main driveway between the classrooms. **If weather does not permit outside time, please ring the bell on the Toddler fence.**

**If you do not pick up your child within 15 minutes of their scheduled school day dismissal time, your child will join the aftercare program until your arrival for a charge of \$25.00.**

Communication with your child's teacher should be brief. This will help to prevent backups and provide consistency for your child so that they know when you arrive it is time to go home. **It is the law that the parent/guardian or driver is responsible for buckling their child into the seat.**

### *Primary and Elementary*

If you need to come inside the Primary or Elementary building during dismissal times, please park in a parking space to ensure a steady flow of traffic and a safe dismissal for all children.

We request that the driver please pull forward in the loading/unloading zone and buckle your child into their 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.**

**Primary Half-day dismisses at 11:30 a.m. at the Primary entrance.** Staff will escort your child to your car.

**Primary Full-day dismissal begins at 2:50. If you do not pick up your child by 3:15, your child will join the aftercare program until your arrival for a charge of \$25.00.**

**Elementary dismisses at 2:50 for siblings and they will be picked up at the Primary building. All other students are dismissed at 3:00 p.m.** and are dismissed where their arrival takes place.

Please make sure you pull up to the sign in the pick-up circle to prevent the car line from blocking the street.

If you have a change in the person designated to pick up your child, you are required to inform the administration. If someone other than the person(s) listed on your child's student information form 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 their scheduled school day dismissal time, your child will join the aftercare program until your arrival for a charge of \$25.00.**

### Early Pick-up

If you need to pick up your child early, please call ahead so that we can ready your child with minimum distractions to the classroom.

**Elementary and Primary** early dismissals will be picked up at the administration office.

**Toddler families** should ring the bell on the toddler fence for early dismissal.

## Back and Forth Bags

- **Toddler and Primary**

We provide each newly enrolled child with a small bag to carry home clean and soiled clothing. Make sure your child's bag contains a Ziploc bag with at least one complete change of clothing appropriate to the season, including shoes. 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 provide each newly enrolled Elementary student with a school issued backpack.

Replacement backpacks are available for \$28.00 each.

- **All Students**

Replacement lunch totes are available for \$15.00 each.

## 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 100 or above, keep them home for 24 hours after the fever has broken without medication. Viruses are still active within a 24-hour period.
- If your child has a bout of diarrhea or vomiting, keep them 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.

Thank you for following these important guidelines. 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.

## COVID-19

The CDC now recommends returning to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and if a fever was present, it has been gone without use of a fever-reducing medication.

## Immunization Requirements

Health records are due when you enroll your child. Per DHS requirements, children without current immunization or immunization exemption form will not be admitted to class until they are updated. If in doubt, please consult your child's physician.

## Birthdays

### Toddler Birthday Celebration

Birthdays will be celebrated as a class but without family members. **The family may provide a health snack for their child's class with notice to the teacher.** For this tender age, it is too disruptive to the children and lacks the important consistency they require.

### Primary Birthday Celebration

We have a special ceremony for birthdays in Primary. **Please ask your child's teacher for a birthday celebration form 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", but a **healthy snack is acceptable with notice to the teacher.** Parents are welcome to attend this special moment with their child.

### Elementary Birthday Celebration

Elementary children also have a special ceremony. **Birthday celebrations are to be scheduled in advance with the child's teacher.** Children bring in photos for each year of their life and create their own timeline of life to present to the class and their parents. Please refrain from bringing in "sweet treats", but a **healthy snack is acceptable with notice to the teacher.** Please contact your child's teacher for more details.

## Classroom Pictures

School pictures are taken each year. 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 classrooms and 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. Expect your child to go outside daily. **If your child should not go outside for medical reasons, it is best to keep your child home from school that day.**

## Cold Weather and Coats

### *Early Childhood and Elementary:*

- In cold weather, children will be asked to put on their coats when they go outside to the outdoor classroom or playground.
- A child who chooses to remove their coat while working or playing because they are too warm, will hang up the coat in the outdoor space. If they should become cold again, they will put on their coat. If not, they will bring their coat inside when they return to the classroom.
- On rainy days, children must have a raincoat with them and wear it in the outdoor classroom and on the playgrounds. No umbrellas please.

### *Toddler:*

Because toddler children are still learning to communicate their needs, teachers will assist children with decisions to wear coats and may stay indoors more frequently than older children to ensure children do not become extremely cold.

*If there is lightning, extreme wind, or extreme cold, the children will stay 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 in the storage compartment of the bench at the primary building.**

## 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. To us, discipline 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 and last longer.

*Please note that all children experience conflict with peers.* Children are learning to cooperate and socially interact. As they practice social interaction, conflicts naturally occur. Children 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/guardians, you can assist your child by considering their conflicts as learning opportunities for them, 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 use gentle hands and have consent to touch others.
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 with children:**

#### **Toddler**

Staff model expectations and verbalize often what they are doing and feeling. When toddlers need redirection, staff give the children acceptable alternatives.

For conflict resolution with peers, staff talk often about emotions with the toddlers. “My work”, “I feel sad” etc. are frequently verbalized to help the children learn to communicate their needs and wants. If a child is hurt by another, the staff verbalize what happened and help the children understand how the other is feeling.

#### **Primary and Elementary**

Children practice lessons of classroom rules, and grace and courtesy through direct instruction and role play.

When a child is observed showing lack of respect for others, themselves, or materials, the staff give the children acceptable alternatives to the behavior, and/or depending on the behavior, help them through the problem-solving process below:

***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.

## Peace Talks

Children are taught how to have peaceful conflict resolution through “peace talks”. The children have access to a Peace Rose or Peace Stick. The child who has the item is the person who may talk. The children are taught how to say what they did not like and what they need for a resolution. Then the other child is given the opportunity to state their side after they show they understand the other’s request. An example of a peace talk follows:

Child 1: “I didn’t like it when you took the pencil from my hands. I had it first. I need you to give it back to me. “

Child 2: “I hear that you did not like me taking the pencil and you want it back. I need that pencil to finish writing my name on my work! It is the only one I could find! Can I use it first and then give it back?”

Child 1: “Okay, but next time, please ask me for it.”

Child 2: “Okay. I will ask you for it next time”

This model of problem solving and peaceful conflict resolution helps children learn empathy and 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!

## Disruptive Behavior Policy

The relationship between the parents/guardians, teacher/school, and child is a vital part of a child’s success. When a child acts in a manner that warrants communication from the school, families may receive a *Family Communication Form* to sign. This form is intended to ensure you are aware of the behavior and actions the school has taken to resolve the issue. ***It is not a request for action on your part.*** If there are ways to support or reinforce desired behaviors, the teachers will inform the family.

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, and mistreating school property.

**For toddler children:**

1. Staff will redirect the behavior by offering other alternatives and help verbalize the child's needs and/or feelings. If the disruptive behavior continues to escalate or continues to prevent staff from performing their duties for the classroom, an additional staff member will support if possible, the parents/guardians will be informed, and the child may be sent home.

**For 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. Depending on the severity of the behavior, a Parent Communication Form may be shared with parents/guardians to sign.
3. If the disruptive behavior continues to escalate or continues to prevent staff from performing their duties for the classroom, the child will be sent to the office and parents/guardians 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 follow protocols for repeated disruptive behavior.
5. If a child flees the designated environment without the permission of the teacher or assistant, for the child's safety, the child's parents/guardians 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 the student in filling out a Behavior Reflection form. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the Behavior Reflection may be shared with the parents to sign.
3. If the disruptive behavior continues to escalate or continues to prevent staff from performing their duties for the classroom, the child will be sent to the office and parents 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 follow protocols for repeated disruptive behavior.
5. If a child flees the designated environment without the permission of the teacher or assistant, the child's parents/guardians will be contacted and the child may be sent home.

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

- Parents/guardians notified and asked to pick up child from school or event
- Conference with parents/guardians
- Requirement for specialized support

- Action plan in place that may include but is not limited to: recommendations for evaluations, diary journal by parents/guardians, plan of action for when the behavior occurs, journaling of behaviors by parents/guardians and teacher.
- Possible dismissal

## Toddler Biting Policy

Biting is a normal part of toddler development. It is usually a result of not enough and/or ineffective use of language. The Montessori Method in toddler lends itself to already preventing many biting behaviors; staff always work to give the frustrated child words and adjust meet the individual needs of each child. Coaching the appropriate words is the best way to resolve the problem quickly. If biting does occur, the staff calmly removes the child from the area and say, "Biting hurts". They then closely supervise the child for the rest of the day. The other staff member quickly comforts and cares for the child who was bitten.

Though toddler biting is common, we understand that it is one of the most difficult behaviors to deal with because of the effects it has on everyone involved. It can occur without warning, can be difficult to defend against, and understandingly, can provoke strong emotions in the biter, the victim, the families, and the caregivers involved. We follow the below policy when a biting occurs:

The parent/guardian of the biter and the parent/guardian of the child who was bitten will be called by the teacher or administration if the skin was 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 bites three times in one day, or if the skin is broken, they will be sent home.** If biting continues to be a challenge for a child, staff will work closely with the family to develop a plan of action, which could include shortened days or referrals for services. **For more information on toddler biting see: [Understanding and Responding to Children Who Bite by NAEYC](#)**

## Primary and Elementary Biting Policy

If a primary student intentionally bites another student, the child's parents/guardians will be contacted. The parents/guardians of the biter and the parents/guardians of the child who was 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 was bitten. If a child becomes a chronic biter, the parents/guardians 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 they will be sent home for the rest of the day. The parents/guardians of the child who was bitten will be called by the teacher or administration if the skin was bruised or broken. The teacher or witness must fill out a Behavior Reflection with the biter and a report for the child that was bitten.

## 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 be addressed 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/guardians will be called and a strategy plan will be put in place. 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, physical aggression, 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 and there is not a staff member who can give the child the one-on-one attention they may require. We greatly appreciate your support in helping your child understand what behaviors are acceptable and appropriate by continually coaching and role-playing situations with them. We typically do not encourage consequences at home for toddler and primary aged students because the young child will either not associate the consequence with the behavior, or a consequence has already occurred at school. **Families who are unable or willing to follow through with requests of the school, gossip, threaten, yell or who do not adhere to our other school policies and procedures may be asked to withdraw their child from our program.**

**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)**

## 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.

## Dress Code

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.

**Acceptable shoes for school are soft-soled, closed toe shoes free of lights or characters. This allows the children to run and play safely outside, and work without added distractions during classroom time.**

**Boots and shoes without grip, and flip-flops are NOT acceptable footwear at school as they are slippery outside, noisy inside, and can be dangerous.**

**In Toddler and Primary, please refrain from wearing clothing with popular characters on them, as this type of clothing is very distracting for young children.** It is also important for grace and courtesy that non-religious hats be removed when entering classrooms.

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

**Non toilet-trained toddlers must use diapers (No pull-ups please) and transition to underwear when toilet-training takes place. Primary children must be toilet-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.

## Evaluations and Conferences

Conferences and progress reports are given to parents in the fall and spring semesters. However, feel free to schedule a conference with your teacher when needed.

Teachers utilize their knowledge of child development and observation as part of the evaluation process. If a teacher notices something concerning about a child's development, they will share these observations with the child's family and will share what modifications they are making for the child in the classroom. They will also offer ideas to implement at home and offer a list of services in the area

should this be a need. Teachers will discuss strategies and accommodations with therapists with parental permission.

To best serve all students, it is imperative that families share any updates to their child's medical and educational needs with the school. WFMS will do its best to facilitate all students' needs and provide space for therapists to visit students on campus. If the school is unable to facilitate a child's needs, the school will communicate this with families to discuss next steps.

## ***Incident Weather***

If there is a chance for severe weather, administration will monitor the weather closely. We will inform families through text, email and phone message should we need to move to shelter or cancel school.

### **Thunderstorms and Tornado Warnings:**

If thunder and/or lightning are present, all students and staff will move indoors until the storm has passed and thunder and or lightning has not been present for at least 15 minutes.

Should there be a tornado warning for our area, all students and staff will move to their shelter locations and families will be notified. No one will be able to answer doors or phones until an all clear has been announced to staff and families.

### **Winter Weather:**

- Head of School will assess situation for safety of staff and families, and campus safety. Part of this assessment includes if enough staff are able to be present to remain in compliance with licensing. They will make an announcement as soon as possible
- Closings are announced through email, text, and TV channels 40/29 (KHBS) and 51 (KNWA)
- If a quick freeze of the roads is eminent while school is in session, the Head of School may consider keeping children at school until the roads are passable or close the school early

**Please note:** Arkansas public schools are required to offer 1,068 hours of instruction time, which includes recess for elementary aged children. Our school calendar, without snow days provides 1,134 hours of instruction for full-day students K-6<sup>th</sup> grade. 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. Should we fall below what is required by Arkansas Public Schools, WFMS will provide make-up hours to ensure we offer at least the hours our public schools offer.

## **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.

## Lice Policy


It is expected that school age children may get head lice. Lice is 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 and do not transmit disease, but it is an inconvenience. At Walnut Farm, we follow the latest clinical report from [The American Academy of Pediatrics \(2010\)](#)

- 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.
- If your child exhibits symptoms of head lice, (primarily frequent scratching of the head) you should examine your child's head, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck, for nits and lice. If nits or lice are found, all household members should be examined for nits and lice. Persons with live (crawling) lice or nits within 1/4 inch or less of the scalp should be treated.
- If a child exhibits symptoms at school, the child will be checked for head lice. If live lice are found, the parents/guardians will be notified that day. Children must be treated before returning to school.
  - 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.
- A notice will be sent home to families whose child was in the same classroom as another with head lice. Families need to check their child frequently, especially if their child exhibits symptoms, for four weeks to make sure that they do not develop an infestation.
- 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 products should be used to treat individual patients. You may wish to contact your doctor, pharmacist, or health department for additional information about which products have 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/guardian. We will do our best to keep you informed, maintain the classroom, and to help educate the children and their families.

## Children's Meals

### Snack

Snacks are provided by WFMS. Snack is prepared and served by an adult during scheduled snack time for each classroom and follows FDA nutrition guidelines. 

### Lunch

Lunch will be brought from home using the WFMS lunch bag. WFMS will provide milk at lunch. All of the children will enjoy their lunch in their classroom or occasionally outside. Please provide a lunch that follows FDA guidelines, which is mandatory according to DHS requirements.

*Please note:* We do not permit sugary foods or drinks as a part of lunch. Muffins, granola bars or a favorite cereal are allowed as a special treat.

Appropriate servings for snack and lunch per DHS minimum licensing requirements:

<b>Lunch and Supper</b> (Select all five components for a reimbursable meal)				
Food Components and Food Items <sup>1</sup>	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <sup>2</sup> (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)
<b>Fluid Milk<sup>3</sup></b>	4 fluid ounces	6 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces
<b>Meat/meat alternates</b>				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 ounce	1 ½ ounce	2 ounces	2 ounces
Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products <sup>4</sup>	1 ounce	1 ½ ounce	2 ounces	2 ounces
Cheese	1 ounce	1 ½ ounce	2 ounces	2 ounces
Large egg	½	¾	1	1
Cooked dry beans or peas	¼ cup	⅓ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Peanut butter or soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 tbsp	3 tbsp	4 tbsp	4 tbsp
Yogurt, plain or flavored unsweetened or sweetened <sup>5</sup>	4 ounces or ½ cup	6 ounces or ¾ cup	8 ounces or 1 cup	8 ounces or 1 cup
The following may be used to meet no more than 50% of the requirement: Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds, as listed in program guidance, or an equivalent quantity combination of the above meat/meat alternates (1 ounces of nuts/seeds = 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish)	½ ounce = 50%	¾ ounce = 50%	1 ounce = 50%	1 ounce = 50%
<b>Vegetables<sup>6</sup></b>	⅓ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
<b>Fruits<sup>6,7</sup></b>	⅓ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup

<b>Snack</b> (Select two of the five components for a reimbursable snack)				
Food Components and Food Items <sup>1</sup>	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <sup>2</sup> (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)
<b>Fluid Milk<sup>3</sup></b>	4 fluid ounces	4 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces
<b>Meat/meat alternates</b>				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products <sup>4</sup>	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Cheese	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce

## Medication and Medical Needs

For us to provide the best care for students, families are required to fill out our digital student information form when enrolling and are required to update information three times per year. This information includes a checklist of the child's current abilities, educational needs, such as therapies and/or diagnoses, and medical needs such as allergies, emergency medication, etc. Students' medical and dietary needs are posted confidentially in each classroom.

**WFMS does not administer over the counter or prescription medication.** If medication is needed, a parent/guardian must come to the school to administer it to their child.

**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. If your child requires emergency medication, please inform your child's teacher and contact administration to update the digital Emergency Medication form. These items should be given directly to the child's teacher. ***If a child requires their epi-pen, staff will administer it first and call 911, then notify parents. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping track of expiration dates.***

WFMS's goal is for 100% of its staff to be trained in CPR and First Aid. All staff are offered CPR and First Aid training at the beginning of the school year if their training expires within that school year.

## 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. Primary and toddler students that attend the full day program receive a reapplication of sunscreen and/or bug spray. Elementary students are responsible to apply sunscreen and/or bug spray on their own. If a child needs sunscreen, lip balm or insect repellent, parents/guardians must authorize WFMS for re-applications when completing the Student Information form. Sunscreen, bug spray or lip balm must be labeled, put in a zip lock back and given to a morning greeter. **All sunscreen must be in spray form only for the body and stick form for the face.**

## Newsletters

Newsletters from the school occur in the fall, winter and spring each year. They are delivered by email.

## Normalization

Normalization is a term used by Dr. Montessori to describe the classroom settling into routine at the beginning of the year. It takes approximately the first 6 to 8 weeks of school. 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.*** The CDC recommends the following:

Toddler	1–2 years	11–14 hours per 24 hours (including naps) <sup>2</sup>
Preschool	3–5 years	10–13 hours per 24 hours (including naps) <sup>2</sup>
School Age	6–12 years	9–12 hours per 24 hours <sup>2</sup>

2. Make sure you help your child prepare for the next day before bed. They can help make their lunch and set out clothing they want to wear the night before.
3. Give your child ample time in the morning to prepare for the day.
4. Make sure your child has a healthy diet.
5. Try to eliminate your anxiety and stress about the new situation.
6. Make positive conversation about school with your child.
7. When choosing clothing for your toddler or primary aged child, make sure the clothing choice makes toileting free of extra challenges.
8. Make sure your child has some time after school to just be.

## **Transitions and Classroom Placements**

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. 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.

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 teacher and/or Head of School. This transition time does require a fee. You will be billed on a monthly basis. In order to offer the best academic and social preparation possible, children in their kindergarten year are required to enroll in our full-day program.

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 typically 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 transitions can only occur when there is space. Once your child transitions, you will be billed for the additional fees.

## **Staggered Start**

To ensure that each of our new students has a successful beginning to the school year, we use 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 to the school environment.

Elementary students stagger according to level and experience in the classroom. Start dates are communicated by the teacher in your welcome letter before the start of school.

## School 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 risks. This is a vital part of the Montessori experience. Students will participate in the activities and use the materials provided in the outdoor environment.

### **Ratios: Student to Staff per Better Beginnings four-star requirements:**

- **Toddler Students: (18 months-3 years) 1 staff member for every 7 students.**
- **Primary Students: (3 years-6 years) 1 staff member for every 11 students when 3-year-olds are present. 1 staff member for every 12 students when 4-year-olds are present, and 1 staff member to every 15 students when 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.**

# Student Enrichment

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## Outdoor Classroom

All WFMS students have access to outdoor classroom activities. Frequency depends on the level expectations and weather conditions.

Elementary students will have additional outside worktime that also allows them to stay accountable for their classroom work. They will participate weekly in direct instruction through naturalist activities and learn community service through assisting in caring for our outdoor environments.

## Spanish

Toddler students are invited to Spanish activities at least once per week and have access to Spanish books in the classrooms.

Primary students are invited to lessons with a Spanish teacher at least once per week and are exposed to Spanish materials in their classrooms.



Elementary students attend Spanish class once per week and have access to Spanish materials in their classroom.

## Music

Toddler and all primary students will have optional music class once per week. Afternoon primary students and all Elementary students receive music class with a music teacher twice per week.

## Physical Education

Elementary students participate in a weekly PE class where they learn cooperative games, and health and nutrition.

## Library

We are fortunate to have 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 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 it is also 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.

## Elementary Going out/Enrichment Activities

Our elementary students are offered a variety of field trip and enrichment opportunities throughout the school year, as well as community service projects. Volunteer parents/guardians serve as drivers for these activities. All elementary parents/guardians 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 chaperone's role is to provide 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 their current vehicle insurance record, their 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 an outing**

### **During Transportation**

- The children should always wear a seat belt 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.

## **Internet**

Elementary students have access to computers for educational purposes. 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 foolproof, 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.

## Elementary Testing

The MAP tests are one of many tools to provide information to teachers and the school to assist in following the child and helping them unleash their potential. We want to remind families that we teach to the child, not to a test. There are many factors that come into play for a student who is testing (attention, being rested, technical issues, emotional state, etc.). The school looks to the progress reports and observation of students to determine their growth, while reviewing MAP testing data. Percentile data are not indicative of a struggle or superiority, they are related to data of children in the same age groupings who tested with similar questions in the date range. The adaptive test expects that children will answer approximately 50% of the questions incorrectly. The main focus of our program and MAP testing is progress in each child's journey of learning. For more information, please see the appendix.

# Emergency Preparedness Plan

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Walnut Farm has plans and procedures in place to provide the safest environment possible. We also have procedures in place for the possibility of emergencies, crisis, and disasters, which may not be avoidable. The staff is trained and updated in safety and emergency procedures. We also work hard to ensure that all staff are trained and updated in CPR and First Aid. If you would like further information about the Emergency Preparedness Plan, please ask the administration.

## Emergency Drills

**The Head of School or an administrator is responsible for initiating a monthly fire or tornado drill per licensing regulations.** The school also performs other emergency drills as deemed necessary and in accordance with the Emergency Preparedness Plan. Children are coached frequently about how a drill will be handled.

## 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.

## Anonymous Reporting

Students in the elementary program have access to a locked box to submit any suggestions or concerns. The children are educated on its use.

Staff and families are provided access to a locked box in the Primary building and access to an online anonymous reporting form. Both options allow someone to report concerns anonymously.

## Recall Notice and Web Link

As required by DHS, we provide a web address for all WFMS parents/guardians to see if equipment, materials, or toys their child/children are using has been recalled by the Consumer Product and Safety Commission (CSPC). Click here to visit their site: [Search Home - SaferProducts](#) This address is also located on our website under current families. Additionally, upon request, WFMS can provide a printed copy of recently recalled children's items.

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## Parent Participation

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### Visiting the School

**All parents/guardians 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 where they signed in and return their badge after they have finished their business on campus. Sign-in is not required for PA or board meetings, and social gatherings sponsored by the school such as school celebrations or community events.

Parents/guardians 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/guardians 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 may stay for 30 minutes in the classroom while on campus for lunch or a birthday celebration. Longer visits must be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher.

**Please note: Families 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.**

### Parking

Parking at the school is limited. Please park in available spaces first and then use the grassy areas.

### Volunteer

**Contributing your time to WFMS helps ensure that the school runs at an optimal level. Because of this, each WFMS family is required to give 10 volunteer hours per school year.** There are many opportunities to volunteer at the school throughout the year, including: driving on field trips, making materials, running errands, purchasing pet supplies (1 volunteer hour for every \$20.00 spent) making phone calls, or helping with facility and grounds updates and repairs.

Also of high importance:

- Volunteer with the Family Association. The FA offers many options for you to support and volunteer for the school. Please contact them for more details:
- Library chaperone: Please visit with your child's teacher for more information.
- Special presentations: We welcome families to visit and share about their expertise, culture, or special hobbies or interests. Please visit the Head of School or Education Administrator if you want to share with our whole school. If you would just prefer to share with your child's class, please visit with your child's teacher.
- Serve on our Board of Trustees. Please contact the BOT for more information:  
[wfmsbot@gmail.com](mailto:wfmsbot@gmail.com)

## 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 is organized by our Director of Development 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.**

## 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/guardians are welcome to observe our classrooms. All classrooms have observation areas 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. You may call to set up an appointment or email Azusa: [azusa@walnutfarm.org](mailto:azusa@walnutfarm.org)

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 area IS NOT ALLOWED. Parents are not ALLOWED to take photos or videos of children and/or staff unless they have received 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 and to ensure the observation space is available.**

## 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 area) 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.**

## 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.

## Lunch

We welcome caregivers to join us for lunch in **Primary and Elementary**. Our toddler program does not allow lunch with caregivers. 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 ask that we receive a call by 9 a.m. so we can properly prepare for our guests. Please check with your classroom teacher for the exact lunchtime. Please only bring a lunch that follows our lunch guidelines, **(No restaurant food or sweet treats)** Thanks!

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

## Parent Education Meetings and Requirements

Our Parent Education Meetings are vital to your child's success and therefore we **expect parents/guardians 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 of 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/guardians and students. It is through these meetings that our partnership becomes most effective.*

## 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/guardians 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.**

## Problem Solving with Staff Members

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

1. Address the concern with the staff person that can best solve the problem.
2. Use the conflict resolution techniques discussed above.
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.

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

## 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 regarding the child, teacher or school you seek. The Head of School will make the final decision in all grievance matters exercising their 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.

## Harassment Policy and Procedures

### PHILOSOPHY

Walnut Farm Montessori School affirms the dignity of every adult 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 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, parent/guardian, 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, volunteer, parent/guardian, or student to harass another employee, staff member, volunteer, parent/guardian, 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 their educational program or office.
- D. Violations of this policy or procedures will be cause for disciplinary action.

#### II. DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

- A. Harassment based on ethnicity, age, religion, sex, gender identity, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, and disability constitutes discrimination and, as such, violates the policies of the school.
- B. Harassment is conduct or omission that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of their ethnicity, age, religion, sex, gender identity, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, or disability, or that of their 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, stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, that relate to ethnicity, age, religion, sex, gender identity, 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 ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, 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 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 ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, age, or disability. It is not necessary to show that the victim was psychologically harmed.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

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.

- A. Any person who alleges harassment by an employee, volunteer, parent/ guardian, or student should file a complaint in writing directly to their teacher, immediate supervisor, or Head of School. The complaint shall describe the alleged violation, name the alleged offender, alleged victim, and identify any potential witnesses to the incident. *See grievance policy for cases where the harassment has come from the head of school.*
- 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 prohibited.
- C. The right to confidentiality, both 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 harassment will be followed.

### **IV. 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, sexual advances, requests for sexual conduct or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward a student.

## 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 policy.

## 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 on an annual basis.

## 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.

***This booklet's contents 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.***

## Appendix

### Links to Important Information

#### Child Development:

[Arkansas DHS Early Learning Standards](#)

[Arkansas DHS Early Learning Standards-Spanish](#)

[Child Care Centers 4, 5, & 6-Star Requirements | AR Better Beginnings](#)

[Getting Ready for Kindergarten](#)

[Getting Ready for Kindergarten-Spanish](#)

**Child Health:**

[Your Medical Home-AR Kids First and Medicaid Information](#)

[Your Medical Home-AR Kids First and Medicaid Information-Spanish](#)

[AR Kids First Brochure](#)

[Children's Advocacy Center of Benton County | Stop Child Abuse \(cacbentonco.com\)](#)

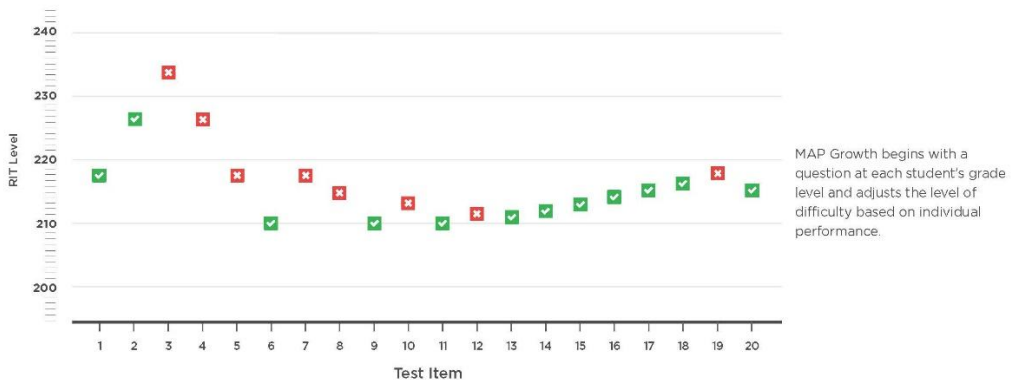


## A family guide to MAP Growth

Children learn better—and faster—when teachers have a clear picture of what students know and how they are growing academically. That's why a group of educators and researchers founded NWEA®, a not-for-profit organization that has created some of the most trusted and reliable assessment solutions available. More than 13 million students in the US and in 140 countries worldwide use MAP® Growth™.

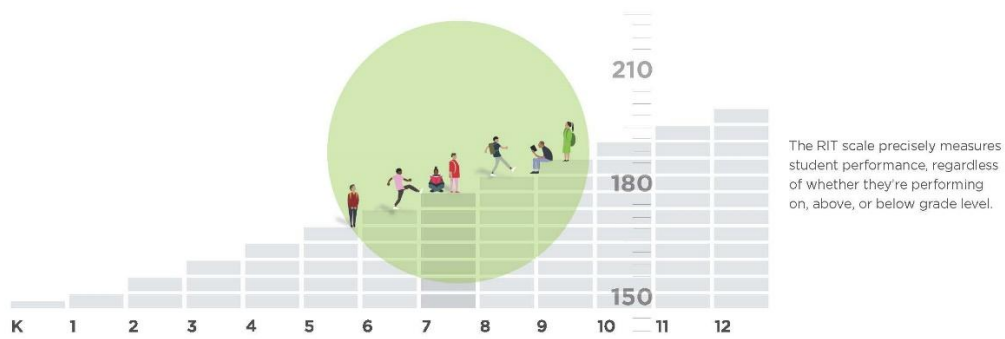
### How it works

MAP Growth is a computer-adaptive test. If your child answers a question correctly, the next question is more challenging. If they answer incorrectly, the next one is easier. This type of assessment challenges top performers without overwhelming students whose skills are below grade level.



### What it measures

MAP Growth uses a RIT scale to accurately measure what students know, regardless of their grade level. It also measures growth over time, allowing you to track your child's progress throughout the school year and across multiple years. Once your child completes a MAP Growth test, they receive a RIT score.



### Your child's RIT score

RIT scores have the same meaning across grade levels. If a fourth-grade student and an eighth-grade student have the same RIT score in reading, then they are testing at the same level in that subject. This stable scale allows teachers to accurately measure each student's academic growth throughout the school year and over time.

You can use your child's RIT score to help them meet their goals. For example, students can enter their RIT scores into our college explorer tool to see which colleges and universities they're on track to enter. You can also ask your child's school about educational resources that use MAP Growth RIT scores to provide personalized learning resources.

**“MAP Growth is important because it allows my teacher and me to see how much I know and my percentile growth. In math, my score used to be 227 (70th percentile), but it is now 240 (87th percentile). I didn't know I was capable of so much growth, but in the end I was.”**

**Kayla, 6th grade**  
Santa Ana, CA

### COMMON QUESTIONS

<b>How do schools and teachers use MAP Growth scores?</b>	Teachers can use the scores to identify learning areas that their class should focus on, as well as monitor the growth of individual students. Principals and administrators can use the scores to see the performance and progress of a grade level, school, or the entire district.
<b>Can MAP Growth tell me if my child is working at grade level?</b>	Yes, but please note that MAP Growth scores are just one data point that teachers use to determine how a student is performing. Please discuss any questions that you have about your child's performance with their teacher.
<b>How often will my child take MAP Growth tests?</b>	Most schools give MAP Growth tests to students at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year (in the fall, winter, and spring). Some schools choose to administer tests only twice a year.
<b>What are norms?</b>	NWEA provides schools with norms by utilizing anonymous data from more than 10 million students around the US. Knowing the top, middle, and bottom scores of all these students combined allows teachers to compare where your child is to other students and help them grow. In addition, NWEA provides comparison data for private, accredited, English-based, international schools using MAP Growth outside the US.
<b>Is MAP Growth a standardized test?</b>	MAP Growth is administered periodically during the school year. Instead of asking all students the same questions, it adjusts to each child's performance—giving a more accurate measure of what they know. Teachers also receive results right away, which enables them to react more quickly.
<b>What types of questions are on MAP Growth tests?</b>	The MAP Growth tests include multiple choice, drag-and-drop, and other types of questions. For sample tests, visit <a href="https://www.nwea.org/warmup">Warmup.NWEA.org</a> .

**For tips on getting ready for MAP Growth testing, check out our blog:**

[nwea.org/blog/category/supporting-families](https://www.nwea.org/blog/category/supporting-families)

**Find more family resources at [nwea.org/familytoolkit](https://www.nwea.org/familytoolkit)**



NWEA is a not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by providing assessment solutions, insightful reports, professional learning offerings, and research services. Visit [NWEA.org](https://www.nwea.org) to find out how NWEA can partner with you to help all kids learn.

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