



Walnut Farm
Montessori School

Community Guide

2025-2026

Dear Walnut Farm Families,

Welcome to Walnut Farm Montessori School!

I am thrilled to be joining Walnut Farm in my first year and to connect with you as part of this amazing community. Whether this is your first year at Walnut Farm or your child is about to graduate from our Upper Elementary program, we are excited that you're a part of the school. Each year in a child's development is filled with milestones and achievements. As you celebrate those for your children this year, we are grateful to partner with you!.

At Walnut Farm, children learn through engagement, independence, and active exploration in responsive environments—both indoors and outdoors. These values shape our daily life as students grow with curiosity, joy, and confidence. The student environments and experiences at Walnut Farm provide opportunities for children to thrive, follow their interests, and develop core skills that will serve them with a lifelong love of learning.

There are many ways for you to be involved at Walnut Farm! The school's Family Association brings our community together through events like the Fall Festival and campus clean-ups, while classrooms benefit from parent drivers for field trips, wish list contributions, and family participation at Discovery Nights in both fall and spring. Parent engagement throughout the year supports our mission and strengthens the connections children feel between home and school.

Thank you for entrusting Walnut Farm with this stage of your child's journey. I look forward to getting to know you and partnering together to ensure each child flourishes here. With your support, we will continue to grow a strong, joyful, and welcoming community.



James Moudry
Head of School
Walnut Farm Montessori School

Table of Contents

About the Montessori Method	4
History of Our School	5
Faculty and Staff	6
Board of Trustees	7
Anti-Discrimination Policy	7
Arkansas Department of Human Services	8
Absences	13
Before and After School Care	13
Arrival and Dismissal Procedures	14
School Bags	16
Illness	16
Birthdays	17
Cold Weather	18
Discipline Policy	18
Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution Process With Children:	19
Dress Code	23
Evaluations and Conferences	24
Children's Meals	25
Medication and Medical Needs	27
Spanish	29
Music	29
Physical Education	29
Elementary Going-Out and Enrichment Activities	30
Elementary Testing	31
Emergency Drills	32
Anonymous Reporting	32
Visiting the School	32
Harassment Policy and Procedures	36
Use of Facilities	38
Truth in Advertising Policy	38

School History and Structure

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 depend 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 our founding, enrollment has grown from less than 50 to over 150.

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 three decades of serving students and families in Northwest Arkansas, 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 children from all over our region. 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.”
– attributed 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.

Faculty and Staff

Administration

James Moudry	<i>Head of School</i>	james@walnutfarm.org
Azusa Crawford	<i>Education Administrator</i>	azusa@walnutfarm.org
Michelle Garcia-Martinez	<i>Admissions Administrator</i>	michelle@walnutfarm.org
Heather Shakespeare	<i>Finance Administrator</i>	heather@walnutfarm.org
Michelle Bashore	<i>Office Coordinator</i>	frontdesk@walnutfarm.org
Daniel Klug	<i>Facilities Manager</i>	dan@walnutfarm.org

Classrooms

Juniper Toddler Classroom:	Whitney Kimbro: Tjuniper@walnutfarm.org and assistant, Sara Lopez
Cedar Toddler Classroom:	Koralys Vallejo: Tcedar@walnutfarm.org and assistant, Melissa Handy
Red Bud Primary Classroom:	Jennifer Crosby: Predbud@walnutfarm.org and assistant, Elyana Anderson
Dogwood Primary Classroom:	Stephanie Throop: Pdogwood@walnutfarm.org and assistant Emely Aguirre
Magnolia Primary Classroom:	Jamie Van Horn: Pmagnolia@walnutfarm.org and assistant, Autumn Wisniewski
Persimmon Primary Classroom:	Paige Kemp: PPersimmon@walnutfarm.org and intern, Kimberly Hodoway
Sycamore Lower Elementary Classroom:	Briana Cooper: ELsycamore@walnutfarm.org , and assistant, Jade Easter
Walnut Upper Elementary Classroom:	Jill Bauer: ELwalnut@walnutfarm.org

Enrichment and support staff

Toddler

Outdoor Classroom and Support	Alli Fosse
Spanish	Koralys Vallejo
Music	Briana Cooper
Aftercare	Bella Dillman

Primary

Outdoor Classroom	Coleen Lewis
Music	Briana Cooper
Art	Kerrey Klatt

Elementary

Spanish	Koralys Vallejo
Music	Briana Cooper
Art	Kerrey Klatt
Outdoor Classroom	

All Levels

Auxiliary Programs Coordinator	Kerrey Klatt, kerrey@walnutfarm.org
Aftercare	Trynyty Holmes, Bella Dillman

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. The school has a Head of School, hired by the Board, and an administrative team, hired by the Head of School, who handle the day-to-day administration of school business. The Board of Trustees helps give direction in policy formation and long-term planning.

2025-26 Trustees

Lina Scroggins, President

Sean D'Hoostelaere, Vice President

Justin Meeks, Secretary

Callie Guenther

Tabitha Tichenor-Turner

Stephen Pauzer

Nikki Tallman

Heather Incao

Clint Schaff

Hunter Haynes

Emma Pengelly

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 every person 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 drives 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 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 the ratio requirements by the state. This is a conscious choice made by the school to allow the following of best practices in a Montessori program of mixed age ranges and the highest sense of independence for our students.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten Calendar

The Arkansas Department of Human Services provides a Getting Ready for Kindergarten calendar website (http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/classroom_docs/DHS_RICalendar.pdf).

Online Connections

Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/WalnutFarm
Instagram	@walnutfarm_montessori
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/walnut-farm-montessori-school
Family Association	Walnut Farm FA Facebook Page (https://www.facebook.com/groups/505495616270856/)

Policies and Procedures

Enrollment Policies and Procedures

Eligibility

Our toddler community is available to children ages 18 months to three 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 ages 2.5 to 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 ages 6 to 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 students' 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. An application for prospective students is offered after touring the school.

The following documents are needed for enrollment:

- a) Application/questionnaire form
- b) Current school and immunization records
- c) Application fee
- d) Enrollment fees apply after acceptance into the program (non-refundable and non-transferable). Please refer to our tuition information on the school website 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 a level commensurate with the intended 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 the school's vision and growth)

Enrollment Contracts

Enrollment is secured by signing the school's enrollment contract agreement and paying the enrollment deposit. First preference is given to families already enrolled at WFMS. Re-enrollment for children currently enrolled in the program is in February. To secure your enrollment for the next school year, submit a signed enrollment agreement by the published due date. Enrollment for new children typically opens in March.

If your circumstances are such that you do not feel comfortable signing a contract, for example, a possible job transfer, please contact us at admission@walnutfarm.org for support with 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:

The School's Commitment to Each Family

- **Individualized Care:** We promise to honor your child as a unique individual, fostering their independence and respecting their personal pace of growth.
- **Academic Excellence:** We provide an authentic Montessori environment where your child is encouraged to embrace productive struggles that build lifelong confidence and resilience.
- **Transparent Progress:** We keep you connected to your child's development through observations, communication, and progress reports.
- **Open Communication:** We commit to timely, positive, and honest updates regarding your child's triumphs and challenges within our school community.
- **Expert Guidance:** Our teaching staff use ongoing observations to understand and follow your child's needs, tailoring our approach and their learning to support their individual developmental stage.
- **A Welcoming Environment:** We pledge to model kindness, respect, and peace in all our relationships, as we teach our students every day.

Each Family's Commitment to the Community

- **Active Engagement:** Partner with the school by attending at least one Community Education Meeting per year and contributing volunteer hours to enrich our school culture.
- **Home-School Connection:** Support your child's independence by practicing Montessori principles at home, such as encouraging self-dressing and involving them in daily tasks.
- **Consistent Attendance:** Ensure your child arrives on time and attends regularly to protect the integrity of their academic, social, and emotional development.
- **Informed Partnership:** Stay connected by reading school emails and the Community Guide, and attending parent-teacher conferences to collaborate on your child's success.
- **Peaceful Collaboration:** Bring questions or concerns directly and respectfully to the individuals involved to maintain a healthy community spirit.
- **Timely Support:** Help our school run smoothly by submitting required documents on time and keeping us updated on significant life events that may affect your child.

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.

Current tuition and fees are listed on the school website.

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 for multi-payment plans. It is optional when paying in full. More information about the tuition insurance is on the school website.

Financial Aid

The Board of Trustees will allocate budgeted tuition income to be available for use as financial aid to designated recipients. Families apply for financial aid by submitting information to Walnut Farm's third-party service, Schools and Services Provider (SSS), for review. Families apply online during January and early February to be considered for the following school year. Prospective families may also apply. For more information, email admission@walnutfarm.org.

Educational Freedom Accounts (EFA)

Eligible families may choose to register for EFAs to support WFMS tuition. This registration of WFMS for EFAs is 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 EFAs is evaluated annually. Continued participation will occur as long as our mission and accreditation are not in conflict with the requirements of the EFA process or LEARNS Act.

For more information about EFAs, visit the admissions section of the school website.

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 the teaching staff and the 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 school office prior to departure.

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 school 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 three times, WFMS reserves the right to remove the child from the program.

After School Care details:

- **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 the Primary Redbud 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 after-school 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 after-school care at \$25 per day. Payment must be made before the drop-in date to ensure availability.
5. A **non-refundable fee of \$250.00** will be charged if a family cancels the after-care program contract (at any time) 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 daily fee for early morning drop-in care and a \$25.00 fee for each day of afternoon drop-in. The afternoon session is 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **The \$25.00 fee is charged per day regardless of how long the child stays in the designated session. Arrangements and payments must be made prior to the date contracted through the school office.** Prior payment is requested for a child to attend drop-in care. Please contact the school 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

For a safe and smooth transition for your child and others, please observe the following guidelines while in the car line:

- *Get in hugs and kisses before entering the car line.*
- *Entertainment screens in vehicles are off during arrival and dismissal.*
- *It is a state law that cell phone use is prohibited in a school zone.*
- *Vehicles should drive no faster than five 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.*
- *The student's bags are close to them and ready for them or the greeter to take from the vehicle.*

Arrival begins at 7:40 a.m. Our staff will approach your vehicle, greet you and your child, ask you to sign in, 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 in your child, greet, and unbuckle your child.

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

Elementary: Students should unbuckle themselves and have their 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 do

not block the circular drive. Arrivals end 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. Children arriving after the arrival time will be considered tardy. 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 helps our staff plan each classroom's activities. Additionally, parents/guardians are encouraged to schedule appointments for children 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 allows your child a consistent and predictable transition and provides a full day at school. We are happy to provide advice and support on how to get children out the door on time. Late arrivals due to important appointments will be waived with a doctor's note. All families arriving after the arrivals time should park and walk with their child to the school office.

Dismissals Procedure

Toddler Half-Day

Dismissal is at 11:15 a.m. Toddler classrooms will be dismissed from the playground. Parents/guardians should park and walk to the gate facing the main driveway between the classrooms. If inclement weather does not permit outside time, please ring the bell on the Toddler fence.

Toddler Full-Day

Dismissal is 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 inclement 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.

During dismissal time, 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 p.m. 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 at the place 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 school. Please call the school or email frontdesk@walnutfarm.org. 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 minimal distractions to the classroom.

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

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

School 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 Bags

Replacement lunch totes and backpacks are available for a charge.

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°F (37.7°C) 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

When symptoms are improving overall for at least 24 hours, and there is no fever (without fever-reducing medication), children may return to typical activities.

Immunization Requirements

Health records are due when you enroll your child. Per DHS requirements, children without a 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

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

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 about 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

Elementary children also have a special ceremony. Birthday celebrations should 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"; *healthful snacks* are 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 aim for children to be able to maximally engage in our outdoor program. 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. *If there is lightning, extreme wind, or extreme cold, the children will stay indoors.*

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.

Primary 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.

Please 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.

Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution Process With Children:

Toddler

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

For conflict resolution with peers, staff members often talk 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. Each classroom should have a peace table or space for conflict resolution.

When a child is observed showing a 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! Staff member helps children realize they are in a conflict situation.

What is the problem? The staff member, through observation and questioning, helps children to 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 staff member guides the children through possible ways to solve the situation.

What is the best solution? The staff member guides the children to agree on a solution and implement it.

Is it working? The staff member 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. Please practice and use this model often with the children.

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

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, 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 occurrence: The teacher will immediately 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 has more than three instances in a two-week period, it is a significant disruption both for the child and their classroom community. Teachers will follow protocols for repeated disruptive behavior.

5. If a child leaves their designated environment without the permission or knowledge of a staff member, for the child's safety, the child's parents/guardians will be called, 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, the child will be asked to sit alone (in the 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 in 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 commits more than three offenses in a two-week period, it may be considered a severe 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, if disruptive behavior continues after initial responses, the school responses may include, and are not limited to:

- Notifying parents/guardians and requiring the child to be picked up from school or an event
- Meeting with parents/guardians
- Requirement for specialized support outside of school
- Creating a behavior management plan that includes recommendations for evaluations, documentation, and information provided by parents/guardians, a plan of action for when the behavior occurs during school, and increased communication or meetings between parents/guardians and the teacher.
- Dismissal from school

Toddler Biting Policy

Biting is a normal part of toddler development. It is often a result of not enough and/or ineffective use of language. The Montessori Method in the Toddler environments lends itself to proactively preventing many biting behaviors. Staff members working with Toddlers work to give children words and adjust to meet the individual needs of each child. Coaching children about what language is helpful supports them in resolving their issues. If biting occurs, staff members calmly remove the child from the area and say, "Biting hurts." They continue to closely supervise the child for the rest of the day. The other staff member quickly comforts and cares for the child who was bitten.

While toddler biting is not uncommon, we understand that it can be challenging to address because of the effects it has on everyone involved. Biting can occur without warning, can be difficult to defend against, and, understandably, can evoke strong emotions in the biter, the victim, the families, and the caregivers involved. We follow the policy below when 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 Education Administrator if the skin was broken. The teacher or other adult 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, but is not limited to, 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 Education Administrator if the skin has been bruised or broken. The teacher or other adult witness must fill out a report for the biter and a report for the child who was bitten. If a child becomes a chronic biter, the parents/guardians may be asked to keep the child out of school until the behavior is fully eliminated.

If an Elementary student intentionally bites another child, the child's parents will be contacted, and the child 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 Education Administrator 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 who was bitten.

Peer Mistreatment and 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, they will be sent to the office to meet with the Education Administrator and the Teacher. Parents/guardians will be called, and an action plan will be put in place. Additionally, elementary children will fill out a Behavior Reflection Form 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 harassment policy in this document.

Thank you for helping to provide a safe environment for the children at Walnut Farm.

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 no 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 toddlers 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 unwilling to follow through with requests of the school, gossip, threaten, yell, or who do not adhere to our other school policies and procedures may have their child(ren) withdrawn from the school.

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 items with fictional characters on them, as this type of clothing can be distracting for young children. It is also important for grace and courtesy that non-religious head coverings be removed when entering classrooms (hats, hoods, etc.).

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

Toddlers who are not yet toilet-trained must use diapers (no pull-ups) 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. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule a meeting at any time.

Teachers use their knowledge of child development and observation as part of the evaluation process for each child. 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 local services should this be a need. Teachers will discuss strategies and accommodations with therapists with parental permission.

To best serve all students, we ask 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.

Inclement Weather

If there is a chance for severe weather, the school will monitor the weather forecast. 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 have not been present for at least 15 minutes.

If there is a tornado warning, all students and staff will move to their on-campus 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:

- The school will assess the situation for the safety of staff and families, and campus safety. Part of this assessment includes determining 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 5 (KNWA)
- If a quick freeze of the roads is likely while school is in session, the school may consider keeping children at school until the roads are passable, or close the school early

Please note: If the need for school closures causes the school to fall below the instructional time required by the Arkansas Department of Education, WFMS will provide make-up hours.

Insurance

WFMS carries the appropriate liability insurance as mandated by Arkansas Insurance guidelines. The school's 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 incidents for which said insurance is used. Further, the WFMS liability insurance policy may not cover the full amount of any claims and/or incidents for which said insurance is used.

Lice Policy

Having lice can affect all people regardless of cleanliness or socio-economic background. Please understand that lice are not life-threatening and do not transmit disease, but they are an inconvenience. At Walnut Farm, we follow the latest clinical report from the [American Academy of Pediatrics \(2022\)](#)

- 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 carefully 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 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (or $\frac{1}{2}$ centimeter) from the base of the hair shaft.
- We expect you to re-treat your child in seven to ten 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 the 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 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:

Lunch and Supper				
(Select all five components for a reimbursable meal)				
Food Components and Food Items ¹	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 ² (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)
Fluid Milk³	4 fluid ounces	6 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces
Meat/meat alternates				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 ounce	1 ½ ounce	2 ounces	2 ounces
Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products ⁴	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 ⁵	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 ounce of nuts/seeds = 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish)	½ ounce = 50%	¾ ounce = 50%	1 ounce = 50%	1 ounce = 50%
Vegetables⁶	⅓ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits^{6,7}	⅓ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup

Snack				
(Select two of the five components for a reimbursable snack)				
Food Components and Food Items ¹	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 ² (at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)
Fluid Milk³	4 fluid ounces	4 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces	8 fluid ounces
Meat/meat alternates				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce	1 ounce
Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products ⁴	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 instructions for use. If your child requires emergency medication, please inform your child's teacher and update your child's 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 staff are trained in CPR and First Aid.

Sunscreen and Lip Balm

Sunscreen, lip balm, and insect repellent are treated as medications. Therefore, please apply these products at home. Primary and toddler students who attend the full-day program receive a reapplication of sunscreen and/or bug spray. Elementary students are responsible for applying 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 sealed plastic zipper bag, and given to a morning greeter. All sunscreen must be in spray form only for the body and stick form for the face.

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 six to eight weeks of school. Here is a list of things that families can do to help their 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)
Preschool	3–5 years	10–13 hours per 24 hours (including naps)
School Age	6–12 years	9–12 hours per 24 hours

2. Make sure you help your child prepare for the next day before bed. They can help make their lunch and set out the 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. Have positive conversations 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 a transition to the next level occurs when there is space available. Once your child transitions, you will be billed for any additional fees. Classroom placement decisions are made by school staff to balance classrooms and support the learning opportunities for all children.

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 staggered 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 are 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 intends to offer an authentic, natural outdoor environment. We aim 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 be reduced to 50% (from 2 to 1) when primary students are resting.

Student Enrichment

Outdoor Classroom

All WFMS students have access to outdoor classroom activities. The frequency of use depends on the level of expectations and weather conditions.

Elementary students will have additional outside work time 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 an 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, 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 checkout. 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 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 and Enrichment Activities

Our elementary students are offered a variety of field trips 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 records, their current driver's licenses, and an individual record check on file in the school 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 their hands and bodies 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 headcounts 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 seatbelt 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 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 same data 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

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, crises, 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 school engages in monthly fire or tornado drills. The school also performs other emergency drills as necessary and in accordance with the Emergency Preparedness Plan. Children are coached frequently about how various emergency situations are handled.

Child Abuse Reporting

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

Children may be subject to interviews by licensing staff, investigators, and/or law enforcement officials on campus 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 suggestion box to share ideas and 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

The school provides a web address for all WFMS parents/guardians to see if equipment, materials, or toys their child/children are using have been recalled by the Consumer Product and Safety Commission (CSPC). [Click here](#) to visit the Consumer Products Safety Commission. Upon request, WFMS can provide a printed copy of recently recalled children's items.

Parent Participation

Visiting the School

All parents/guardians and guests visiting/volunteering at WFMS are required to first check in at the school 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 Family Association meetings, Board meetings, or social gatherings sponsored by the school.

Parents/guardians have access to WFMS during school hours. However, the work of the children, teachers, and other staff members 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 email your child's teacher. 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 school 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 asked to volunteer for ten hours each 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 (one volunteer hour for every \$20.00 spent), making phone calls, or helping with facility and grounds updates and repairs.

Also,

- 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 parents, guardians, and friends of the school 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: wfmbsbot@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 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 Fund is organized 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 school office. You may call to set up an appointment or email Azusa: 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 written permission from the Head of School in advance. 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 about 30 minutes when you come to observe students so that you will get a better understanding of the workings of the classroom. Please fill out one of the observation forms (located in each observation area) during each visit and return the completed form to the front office.

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. 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 meeting 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 two per day. Sometimes we can accommodate impromptu lunch visits; however, we ask that we receive a call by 9:00 a.m. so we can prepare for guests. Please check with your classroom teacher for the exact time of lunch. 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 aim for the meetings to be helpful

and 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 resolve issues and disagreements directly with the person involved in a timely, confidential manner using the peaceful conflict resolution process:

- ***I think we have a problem.*** Please let your fellow community member know how 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 who 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 at hos@walnutfarm.org or by 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, or 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 an 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 of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred. If the allegation is one of sexual misconduct, the school policy on sexual 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.

Use of Facilities

WFMS does not allow outside groups to use the school or its facilities.

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.

The contents of this guidebook may 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 \(cacbentonco.com\)](#)

Elementary MAP Testing:

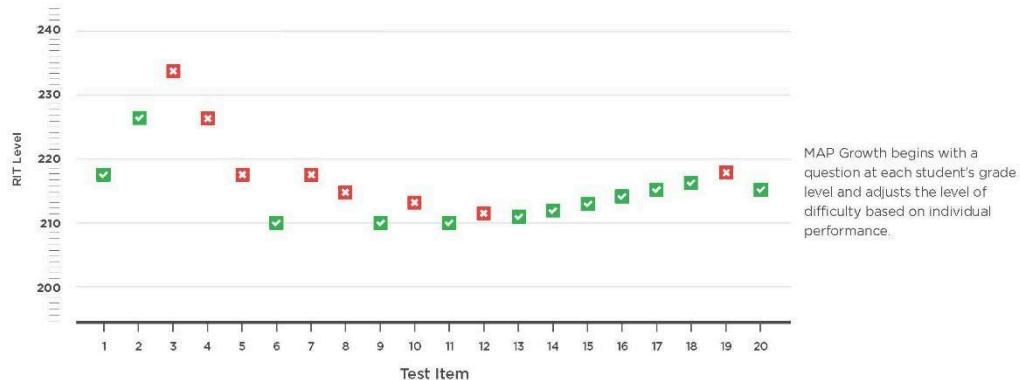


A family guide to MAP Growth

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™.

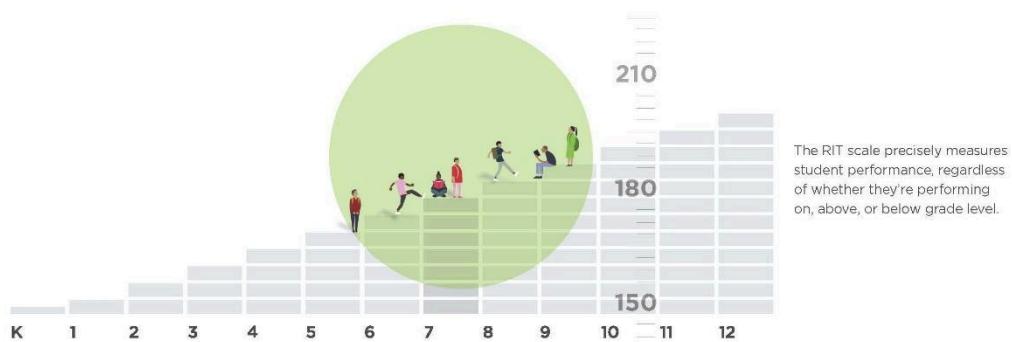
How it works

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.



map GROWTH

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

How do schools and teachers use MAP Growth scores?	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.
Can MAP Growth tell me if my child is working at grade level?	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.
How often will my child take MAP Growth tests?	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.
What are norms?	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.
Is MAP Growth a standardized test?	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.
What types of questions are on MAP Growth tests?	The MAP Growth tests include multiple choice, drag-and-drop, and other types of questions. For sample tests, visit Warmup.NWEA.org .

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

nwea.org/blog/category/supporting-families

Find more family resources at 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 to find out how NWEA can partner with you to help all kids learn.

© 2022 NWEA. NWEA and MAP are registered trademarks, and MAP Growth is a trademark, of NWEA in the US and in other countries. Illustrations © Adam Simpson and Heart 2017. The names of other companies and their products mentioned are the trademarks of their respective owners.

MAY22 | KAP9195



August 2025