



# Guardian Handbook

North Star Montessori admits students of all socioeconomic status, racial or ethnic Heritage, religious belief, and family structure.

This **Parent Handbook** constitutes a valid part of the enrollment agreement between North Star Montessori and the parents or guardians of children who are enrolled at the school. Enrollment at NSM constitutes acceptance of these policies.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance dramatically impacts student achievement. Absences (and tardiness) are disturbing to students, disrupt schedules, requires readjustment to the class routine, and slows down the learning process. Please make every effort to schedule doctor, dentist, and other appointments for students at times outside the school day. This will reinforce the importance of school and will prevent the student from falling behind in his or her work. In the case of absence, inform the school as soon as possible. You can do this through Brightwheel or by calling the office at (812)379-4180. Please leave a message or email- [director@northstarmontessori.org](mailto:director@northstarmontessori.org).

## CELEBRATIONS AND BIRTHDAYS

North Star Montessori respects a wide array of philosophies on celebrations. We start most topics on celebrations with “some people believe” and try to encourage many different views. We celebrate Christmas, Halloween, and other American holidays while giving equal time to other traditional celebrations. We also do more general celebrations like harvest, winter, or spring. We welcome families to share their special celebrations with the class/school to increase all children’s perspectives. Each class has its own special way to recognize and celebrate birthdays. Please discuss with your child’s teacher how birthdays are celebrated in that class. Please check with your classroom teacher concerning special snacks and/or non-edible treats.

## DRESS CODE AND CLOTHING

Please send your child in clothes appropriate for the weather. Remember that we will be playing outside, painting and participating in other messy activities. **Every child needs a set of extra clothes for school (including pants, shirt, underwear, and socks) all labeled with their name!** All clothing worn by students must be modest, free from profanity and culturally insensitive images, words or designs generally understood by the current society to be offensive. Clothing must fully conceal a student’s undergarments. It is suggested that girls wear shorts under their skirts for recess.

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- ❖ Teachers will distribute a supply list at the beginning of the school year. These items will need to be brought in and will be for use by your student and their classroom throughout the year.
- ❖ Parents are responsible for providing an extra set of clothing, diapers, wipes, formula, and other necessities as requested by the teachers.

## GUIDANCE SERVICES

Students attending North Star Montessori who may need additional educational services are eligible for evaluation through First Steps (to age 3) or Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation. If you feel your child may be in need of additional services, please begin a dialogue with your child’s teacher. We will do the same if we feel additional information is necessary. The teacher will assess the child and will begin, and explain, the necessary steps.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATION

We encourage our parents to take an active role in their child’s education, and offer many opportunities to visit, observe, learn, and volunteer. Parents are their child’s first and best teachers. It is important to be as involved as possible in your child’s education. Your support for the classroom is invaluable! You can participate in many ways, including:

- ❖ Read all materials that go home and respond to them as soon as possible.
- ❖ Volunteer to work in the classroom.
- ❖ Donate to the classroom.
- ❖ Share information about your child and what they are doing at home.
- ❖ By participating, even in small ways, you show your child that they and their education is important to you.

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- ❖ Communication between school and home is done primarily through Brightwheel and texts/emails. Please check your child's Brightwheel profile daily for messages.

## LOST/FOUND ITEMS

Found items will be kept at the school until the end of the school year. Any unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each school year.

## PHOTOGRAPHS/SOCIAL MEDIA

Parents sign a release form upon enrollment, giving or denying permission for the school to use students' photos in advertising, publications and on the internet (NSM website and social media sites, such as Facebook.) If your permission changes throughout your child's enrollment, please notify the office immediately.

## ILLNESSES

A child should be kept home when the child has had the following symptoms in the past 24 hours:

- ❖ Chills
- ❖ Diarrhea
- ❖ Infected, red, or swollen eyes (children may attend if UNDER TREATMENT for pinkeye with doctor's release)
- ❖ Vomiting
- ❖ Skin rash or sores
- ❖ Sore
- ❖ Throat
- ❖ Fever
  - When a child has had a fever (100.8 degrees or higher), the child may not return to school until at least 24 hours fever free without the assistance of medication. (Tylenol, Motrin, etc.)
- ❖ If your child has a cold:
  - The child should remain home if they have excessive nasal discharge or cough.
  - The child should remain at home if they receive medication that would make them too tired to participate in class.
- ❖ The child should feel well enough to participate in all activities including outdoor and gross motor activities.
- ❖ **Head Lice**
  - A child who has an active case of lice (live lice present) must remain at home until treatment has eliminated the active lice. Treatment for nits should be continued until all presence of nits are gone,
- ❖ With your help, we can keep illnesses to a minimum. If your child becomes ill at school, he/she will be cared for individually, removed from the classroom, and you or an authorized person listed on the emergency form will be notified immediately to pick up your child.
- ❖ **You will be contacted to pick up your child if any of the following happens:**
  - ❖ **Fever of 100.8 or higher**
    - **In cases of teething or vaccinations, staff can administer A SINGLE DOSE of over-the-counter pain/fever reducer, provided all appropriate paperwork is completed prior to administration and medicine is provided. If the fever does not decrease to the appropriate level after 30 minutes the child will need to be picked up. If the fever does go down, but then returns the child will need to be picked up.**
  - ❖ **More than 2 diarrheas**
  - ❖ **Vomiting**
  - ❖ **ANY CHILD THAT HAS TO BE PICKED UP, DUE TO ILLNESS, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN FOR 24 HOURS OR UNTIL SYMPTOM FREE WITHOUT MEDICATION.**

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## MEDICATION

Prescription medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, a date, directions, and physician's name.

- ❖ Parent or legal guardian must sign an authorization form.
- ❖ No prescription will be administered after its expiration date.
- ❖ Non-prescription medication must be labeled with the child's name and the date. It must be left in the original container, and the teacher must administer it according to label directions. For the safety of all children, NO medications are to be placed in the child's lunch box. All medication must be checked in the classroom where it will be stored or refrigerated as applicable. All medication should be taken home daily or approved to be left overnight in the first aid area. In instances where medication is to be taken from household to household by the child, these medications need to be checked in with the teacher as above. NO medications should be left in the school bags.

## NAPPING

Any child enrolled in the Little Dippers, Big Dippers, Cheetah, or Pegasus Classes who are in need of an afternoon nap will have approximately two (2) hours for a rest period.

## LUNCH

**Staff must be notified in writing if your child is allergic to any food.** Lunch time is the time to refuel small bodies. Protein is important to brain and muscle growth. NSM encourages parents to send a nutritious lunch, with a healthy portion of protein and good choices. Children in full day programs need to bring lunch to school daily. Refrigerated storage is available and microwaves are available for warming lunches. Please do not send frozen entrées/dinners that take several minutes to heat. **Please send a non-spill water bottle with your child daily.**

## DISCIPLINE IN THE TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Our environment is prepared to offer the children a wide variety of satisfying and purposeful activities with the goal of each child feeling accomplished in their activities. The need for external discipline can often be met by redirecting the child toward more appropriate uses of energy.

- ❖ An action plan for assisting a child experiencing problems will be developed by the parents and the teacher.
- ❖ If the program is not meeting the needs of a child or if a child's behavior is unduly compromising the work of the group, that child's placement in the class may be re-examined. While we want what is best for every child, what is best for the group of children is of primary concern. In the event of aggressive or violent behavior, with risk of injury to the student or others, a hug hold may be used to prevent injury.
- ❖ Parents will be asked to participate in a behavior meeting, to discuss the behavior and consequences, and if necessary, to formulate an exit strategy for the child.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parents. Our parking lot is a very busy place.

- ❖ Please turn off your vehicle's engine and escort your child into the school.
- ❖ Milky Way, Little Dippers and Big Dippers classes will use the door on the lower level and Pegasus and Cheetah classes will use the front door.
- ❖ Be sure the Staff Member in charge acknowledges your child before you leave.

## EXTENDED SCHOOL CARE (3:30pm-5:30pm)

Our Extended program is a fun enrichment program that allows children time for homework, relaxation, games, outdoor play, and group events. It incorporates characteristics of a Montessori environment such as freedom of choice, respect, exploration, movement, and consistency.

- ❖ Single Day Aftercare
  - Single Day Aftercare is offered at \$20 per day.
    - Must be scheduled 24 hours in advance and is subject to availability.

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## NORTH STAR MONTESSORI SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Our programs will be closed, Labor Day, the day before and after Thanksgiving, Christmas Break, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Holiday (specific days vary per year), and the day before BCSC school year begins. A yearly calendar will be available on the admissions page at northstartmontessori.org and will be published by August.

- ❖ NSM may close due to weather conditions based off the city/county emergency weather recommendations.
- ❖ Brightwheel Alert Messaging will be used for these closings. Please be sure your mobile phone is verified through Brightwheel.

## LATE PICK-UP

- ❖ Children are expected to be picked up on time.
- ❖ If you are going to be late, let the teachers know asap, via Brightwheel.
- ❖ If you are late, the staff will attempt to call the parents twice, before moving to emergency contacts. If no one can be reached, staff must contact child services after 30 minutes of no contact with parents or guardians. If the child is not picked up within an hour, even if contact has been made, authorities must be contacted.
- ❖ **Pick-up Times**
  - **Non-aftercare – 3:30pm**
  - **Aftercare – 5:30pm**
- ❖ **1<sup>st</sup> Violation within one calendar month**
  - Parents will be charged a per-child late pick-up fee of \$10 for arrival between 5 and 10 minutes past pick-up time, and an additional \$25 for arrival between 10 and 20 minutes past pick-up time.
- ❖ **2<sup>nd</sup> Violation within one calendar month**
  - Parents will be charged a per-child late pick-up fee of \$20 for arrival between 5 and 10 minutes past pick-up time, and an additional \$50 for arrival between 10 and 20 minutes past pick-up time.
- ❖ **3<sup>rd</sup> and all subsequent violations within one calendar month**
  - Parents will be charged a per-child late pick-up fee of \$40 for arrival between 5 and 10 minutes past pick-up time, and an additional \$100 for arrival between 10 and 20 minutes past pick-up time.
- ❖ If there are three or more violations within a month or it is an ongoing issue, a meeting will be set up with the parents, the Director, and the Supervisor to discuss continuation of childcare at our school

**IN THE EVENT OF RUNNING LATE, PLEASE USE BRIGHTWHEEL FOR COMMUNICATION, AS THERE MAY BE NO ONE IN THE OFFICE TO ANSWER THE PHONE.**

## FINANCIAL POLICIES

- ❖ Once registered, all rates apply throughout the year.
- ❖ If a student unenrolls before the 15<sup>th</sup> or enrolls after the 15<sup>th</sup>, that month's invoice will be adjusted at 50%.
- ❖ If a student will not be in attendance for 3 weeks, in a single month, the students spot can be held for 50% of the tuition cost, for one month at a time. This can be done up to two times per year and must be approved by the director **prior to the invoice being processed**. Please contact the director directly to discuss if this option is needed.
- ❖ Tuition costs are not adjusted due to scheduled or non-scheduled school closures. (Holidays, breaks, inclement weather, etc.) unless otherwise noted.
  - The school calendar will be sent out in advance for scheduled closures.
  - Regarding inclement weather, we will go by the Indiana Travel Advisory. We will do our best to give parents a warning when inclement weather is predicted and will let parents know ASAP about a delayed opening or closure.
  - In the event of inclement weather DURING the school day, we will notify parents, with no less than one hours' notice, of an early closure.

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- PLEASE BE SURE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION IS UP TO DATE IN BRIGHTWHEEL AND BE SURE YOU ARE GETTING MESSAGES THROUGH BRIGHTWHEEL! THIS WILL BE OUR MAIN PLATFORM FOR COMMUNICATIONS!
- ❖ Tuition invoices are sent out through Brightwheel 7 days before the due date. Monthly tuition is due on the first. Invoices will receive a \$50 late fee after 15 days. Failure to pay tuition by the last day of the month can result in dismissal from the program, **unless otherwise discussed prior to the end of the month with the school's director.**
- ❖ If holding a spot for more than 30 days, after it becomes available, half the month's tuition will be charged. After one month, the spot will be opened.
- ❖ ***All invoices can be paid through Brightwheel (preferred method), cash, or check. PLEASE PUT YOUR CHILDS FIRST AND LAST NAME ON ANY PHYSICAL PAYMENTS. Please turn all cash or check payments into the office or the office mailbox.***

*In cases of failure to pay, the guardian who is responsible for payment agrees to pay, to the extent permitted by law, NSM's expenses of enforcement and collection, including attorney fees and costs.*

## IDENTIFICATION

- ❖ **ANYONE** picking up a child may be asked for identification. If a teacher does not recognize the person, they will be asked for ID, parents included.
- ❖ You can add authorized persons to your child's school file via Brightwheel as well. Please contact the director if you need help adding or removing an approved person.
- ❖ Individuals who are not on the approved pick up list will not be permitted to remove a child from the facility.
- ❖ If it is an emergency and you need someone different to pick up your child, but are unable to add them into Brightwheel, you can message, via Brightwheel, and they can be added for you.

## UNENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL

In cases where family circumstances change NSM appreciates as much notice as possible.

- ❖ NSM does require notice of withdrawal BEFORE next month's invoice is processed. In cases where such notice is not given, next month's invoice will be charged.
- ❖ In the even that a student's unenrollment date is in the middle of the month, the following policies will apply:
  - If the student is unenrolled before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the invoice will be discounted at 50%
  - If the student attends past the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the full invoice will be charged
  - IF NOTICE IS NOT GIVEN BEFORE THE INVOICE IS PROCESSED, 7 DAYS BEFORE THE 1<sup>ST</sup>, 100% OF THE INVOICE WILL BE CHARGED.
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## ANNUAL FEE

The Annual Fee is charged in August of every year and is prorated for students enrolling outside of August. This fee applies to all students apart from our Milky Way program.

- ❖ Students transitioning from Milky Way into Little Dippers will receive a prorated Annual Fee invoice.

***In cases of failure to pay, the guardian who is responsible for payment agrees to pay, to the extent permitted by law, NSM's expenses of enforcement and collection, including attorney fees and costs.***

## ADMISSIONS

As a matter of policy and philosophy, North Star Montessori School's hiring, admission, and operating procedures are nondiscriminatory in terms of race, color, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

The NSM admissions process is designed to help families gain a deeper understanding of Montessori education and explore its appropriateness for the whole family. Our goal is to answer all your questions and provide important information about NSM values, philosophy, and practices. We encourage and welcome you to ask questions during the interview process.

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1. Once the decision to apply is made, complete the Pre-registration form online at <http://www.northstarmontessori.org> and submit it to the school.
2. Upon receiving, the school will reach out and confirm details with you.
3. Parents or guardians can participate in an informational meeting and tour of the school.
4. A non-refundable \$75 application fee will be processed to hold your child's spot and begin enrollment.
5. If a place is not immediately available, the child may be placed on a wait list in order received.
6. Upon enrollment, you will need to provide the school with a copy of your child's vaccine records as well as a copy of their birth certificate and all enrollment paperwork.