



## PARENT HANDBOOK 2026-27

### **Village Montessori School**

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## WELCOME TO VILLAGE MONTESSORI

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Village Montessori School! We are honored you have chosen to become a part of our school. Your involvement is the first ingredient in your child's bright future.

The Montessori environment begins with the premise that young people's natural curiosity is the driving force behind learning, and this force motivates their activity. Through this innate curiosity, repetition, and then mastering the lesson through teaching other students what they have learned, the lessons are cemented, and the children become ready to progress to the next level. This self-directed formula not only builds healthy self-esteem, but it is also the foundation on which Montessori programs have produced the very best preparatory results in pre- school education for decades.

Your child is about to embark on a wonderful journey of self-discovery. We encourage you to be a part of it! A solid connection between students, parents, and teachers is essential for your child's success. The first step of the journey is to take the time to read through this handbook. And as always, feel free to ask any questions that may arise.

At Village Montessori we truly consider it a high privilege and an honor to be a part of your child's learning and development. With happy, healthy, self-confident children we feel we are doing our part to make the world a better place for them and their children!

Kind regards,

Joan Rodriguez Malone

Founder & Head of School

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Village Montessori School is a full-service preschool facility for children between the ages of three months to nine years. Using the Montessori Teaching Method, our experienced staff provides a caring environment that encourages the complete development of the participating child's mind, body, and self- esteem. The Montessori advantage involves a specialized curriculum, coupled with a custom- designed facility with a very low teacher- student ratio. This formula is proven to provide accelerated learning, healthy activity, and improved confidence in children as they prepare to move into more traditional learning institutions. Village Montessori is also focused on communicating with parents to form a true community of learning.

## OUR MISSION

We will inspire the cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual development of individual children in a secure environment that encourages them to freely explore, create, cooperate, and become an active part of our world.

How we implement our mission:

- We will offer a safe and supportive environment that will nurture children's unique gifts and naturally guide them to become attentive, curious, and self-directed so that they may discover the richness of the world that surrounds them.
- We will help children discover positive self-awareness and strengthen their connections with others in the environment, giving them the ability to realize their fullest potential.
- We will provide guidance and education to the community of parents so that they can more effectively support and guide their children's development.
- We will foster a love of learning with order, concentration, coordination, and independence.

## MONTESSORI METHOD

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator, the first woman to receive a medical degree in Italy. Born in 1870, she developed her method of education early in the twentieth century. She devoted her life to the education of children and was honored and respected throughout the world at the time of her death in 1952.

The Montessori Method emphasizes the potential of the young child. The method cultivates the potential of every child through a prepared environment using specially trained teachers and unique teaching materials.

During the time spent in the Montessori environment, the children's consciousness is exposed to stimulation that is represented in an attractive and encouraging, orderly world. This love for order will last a lifetime. Planting deeply in our children a good sense of order will foster children's discipline and enable them to be successful in attaining their goals under any circumstances that life brings along.

The Montessori Method teaches children in objective, realistic ways, which maximize their sensorial experiences, and then explores the wonderful realm of abstract thinking and imagination as they get older. This early learning experience will enable them to learn faster, easier, and increase their own self-worth.

## GROUND RULES

All children are admitted to our school on a 90-day probationary period. As a school founded on Montessori principles, we believe that every person deserves respect.

As a pre-school, Village Montessori expects students to demonstrate kindness, courtesy, and respect toward the school, fellow students, parents, teachers, and staff.

The goal of a Montessori education is to establish a safe, warm, and caring environment within which we teach students positive and appropriate ways to handle situations, as opposed to assuming that misbehavior and punishment are inevitable. We seek to develop a strong sense of self-discipline, responsibility, and courtesy, and to develop an atmosphere conducive to peaceful studies.

When anyone at Village Montessori finds it difficult to follow the school's expectations about interpersonal conduct or the guidelines established in the Parent Handbook, we will quickly bring the student, family, and staff together to work towards a solution.

Our ground rules are essentially the same at every age level of the school, although the language and emphasis changes somewhat for the older student. This is how we will explain our expectations to our students. Please review these rules with your child:

- Be kind and gentle to each other.
- Everyone has the right to privacy and concentration.
- Everyone has the right to personal belongings.
- Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure. We encourage all people to use words that do not insult or threaten someone else.
- Everyone has the right to be physically safe. Please do not do anything that might hurt or endanger anyone.
- At Village Montessori, no one is allowed to fight, push, trip, or use any other aggressive behaviors.
- Use the playground equipment as intended. For example, do not walk up the slide.
- Give everyone who wants to play the opportunity to join your game.
- Do not throw sand, mulch, sticks, or rocks.
- Please put all outdoor equipment away when you are finished with them.
- Do not use the fence in areas after school hours.
- Montessori materials are to work

## STARTING SCHOOL

Everyone, even a very young child, has a general and positive idea of what “going to school” means. However, the actual event is sometimes overwhelming for both child and adult. Village Montessori will help ease your transition to school.

On the first day of school, many young children and their parents feel a bit nervous when they leave each other and are in an unfamiliar situation. You may even expect a few tears.

Here are a few points that will help each of you establish some comfort with school:

- Try to keep the morning stress free, but on a normal schedule.
- Please arrive on time.
- Remind each other that you both have been looking forward to school.
- Remind each other that the children at school are just like you and that the adults at school love children.
- Use the teacher’s name when possible.
- Remind each other how proud you both are that the “first day” is here
- If this is your child’s first year at Village Montessori, we encourage you to visit the campus frequently before the school year begins to allow both of you to become familiar with the new setting. Generally, be reassuring as you talk with your child about the new school

On the first day of school, please do not linger too long in the class or react with alarm if your child is hesitant about the separation. It is very important to reassure your child about where you will be during the day, and by what time you will return for pickup in the afternoon. Some children may be sad for a little while during the first few days, but kind words and reassurance almost always alleviate their fears. The teachers are wonderful in helping children through these situations.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school year begins in August and concludes in May for toddlers and primary & elementary students. Please refer to your Village Montessori

published calendar for exact dates. In the summer, we offer a summer camp program to those who wish to enjoy our school year-round.

The infant room is a full year-round program. However, the school will close on published days and holidays.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Coral Way: Drop off is at 8:15am for preschool, 8:30am for toddlers and 8:30am for infants.

Infants are dropped off in the front office and preschoolers/toddlers are dropped off in the carline of 1400 Coral Way parking lot. For preschoolers/toddlers, all parents must remain in their vehicles, and our staff will escort the children to the school. Pick-up is at 3:00pm (front office for infants and 1400 Coral Way parking car line for preschoolers/toddlers.) For full day pick up, please wait in the carline until a staff member brings your child to your vehicle. Half-day pickups are at 11:30 am at the front office.

Shenandoah: Drop off is between 8:15 am- 8:30 am for Picasso, 8:30 am-8:45 am for Britto, and 8:45 am-9:00 am for Raphael.

Drop off for Picasso & Britto is along 1271- 1273 & 1267 Coral Way st and drop off for Raphael is by the side white picket fence where our playground is located on SW 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pick up for Picasso is between 5:15 pm-5:30 pm, 2:45pm-3:00pm for Britto, and 3:00 pm-3:15 pm for Raphael. Pick-up locations are the same as drop-off. If you arrive late, please drop your child off at the side white picket fence and ring the doorbell. We will escort your child to class. Half-day pick up is at 11:45am for both preschoolers and toddlers and will be on the side white picket fence.

Killian: Drop off is between 8:30 am-8:45 am for preschoolers. If you arrive after 8:45 am, please drop your child off at the office and we will escort them to the class. Half-day pick-up is at 12:30 pm and full-day pick-up is between 2:45 pm-3:00 pm.

Drop off for toddlers is between 8:15am-8:30am. If you arrive after 8:30 am, please drop your child off at the office and we will escort them to the class. Half-day pick-up is at 11:30 am and full-day pick up is between 2:30 pm-3:45 pm.

Arriving at school promptly enables your child time to transition into the school day. A child's tardiness slows the development of the child's socialization skills and impacts classroom routine. Please give your family ample time to arrive at school.

**If you need to speak with your child's teacher, we kindly ask that you schedule a time outside of drop-off and pick-up hours.**

These times are focused on ensuring a smooth and calm transition for all children. We're happy to arrange a meeting at a time that works well for both you and the classroom routine. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

**To ensure the safety of our students, children will only be dismissed to people listed on their authorized pickup list with proper ID.**

## ABSENCES

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or any other reason, please call the school office that morning and leave a message.

## ILLNESS

Village Montessori is a community that is respectful of the health of others. Staying at home at the first sign of illness is important. Under no circumstances will parents be allowed to bring a sick child to school.

Students with infectious diseases, such as chickenpox or strep throat, must stay out of school until the contagious stage has passed. Children who have had head lice must be treated and nit free before returning to school. For the sake of other children's health, it is vital that you let the office know your child's diagnosis as soon as possible.

In the case of the common cold, the student should remain at home as long as there is: a fever present, a sore throat, eye infection, continuous and colored nasal secretions, or persistent chest cough. We determine the need to send a child home by both the symptoms listed above and by their behavior. Children who fall asleep during the morning work-cycle or who are unusually cranky or sad during the day (not their usual temperament) may be sent home. Students with signs of vomiting, diarrhea, head lice, or an undiagnosed skin rash should also remain home.

Students will be sent home if any above symptoms appear while they are at school. They should remain home for at least the next 24 hours. If a fever is present, please keep your child home until they are fever free for 24 hours.

Village Montessori reserves the right to call and request that your child be picked up immediately due to illness. Your child will be kept comfortable in a designated isolation area while waiting for parent arrival.

Our illness policies will be strictly enforced, for the health, well being, and safety of all concerned.

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SUSPECTED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Stiff neck
- Diarrhea or more than one abnormally loose stool
- Temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Exposed open skin lesions
- Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Head lice (to return to school, the child's parent needs to sign statement that treatment has occurred and be free of nits (louse eggs))

## **INFECTION CONTROL**

Because infants are oral, (putting toys in the mouth, licking objects, putting hands in the mouth then touching items) germs are easily passed from one child to another. The staff strives to maintain a sanitary room. Montessori materials, dishes, chairs, and tables are all washed with hot soapy water and rinsed with a water/bleach solution to keep items sterile. We also ask that you take your child's sheet and blanket home every Friday to be washed. We recommend daily baths to decrease the risk of germs getting passed to family members.

## **MEDICATION**

Except under extraordinary situations, we do not administer medications at school.

Please do not send in any medication with your child, including aspirin or other over-the-counter drugs or topical creams. Antibiotics and other medications

should be scheduled so that dosages are taken when the student is at home. When children are so ill as to require frequent medication, they should remain at home. We also ask that students do not bring vitamins or flower essences.

If your child requires the use of an EpiPen or similar allergic/asthmatic reactionary medication, please see the Director of School.

In the event of any medical situation that requires immediate medical attention, we will want your child to see a doctor right away. Please remember to keep your Emergency/Medical Information form up to date in the office. We must be able to reach you at any time during the school day.

If your child needs immediate medical attention, and you cannot be reached, your enrollment agreement authorizes us to seek medical care in your name. We will call 911 and your child will be transported to the hospital.

All efforts will be made to contact a parent during this time.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Fire drills are held monthly. During a fire drill, all children are evacuated according to a predetermined route. We will transport infants in a portable crib. We will take attendance to have an accurate account of all children.

In the event of a county or state emergency, the school will follow the recommendations from Miami-Dade county or state agencies.

In the event of a hurricane or tornado warning, we will follow Miami-Dade County Public School procedures. Please tune into local radio or television stations for advisories. If you are instructed to pick up your child, please be prompt.

## **SAFETY AND SUPERVISION**

Safety is the number one priority at Village Montessori. No child is ever left alone unsupervised. Our staff is constantly always watching and directing children and can always respond to emergencies during the school day.

This is the staff's primary responsibility. We request that you refrain from conversations with teachers while children are present. Please schedule an appointment to discuss any concerns or issues that may arise.

It is essential for the safety of the students that all parents follow the drop off and pick up procedures previously stated in this handbook. Please be safe as you enter and exit the parking lot and always buckle your child in a safe restraint.

## **INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS**

If an incident or accident should occur on school grounds, it will be addressed immediately. If an incident report is warranted, you will be notified at pick up and asked to sign the proper documentation.

### **Use of Surveillance Equipment**

The school utilizes surveillance video cameras in its non-private areas to assist with student and employee safety and security. Aside from bathrooms and locker rooms, the school retains the right to conduct video surveillance of any portion of the school's property, which includes all persons and property located anywhere on school property. The school does not make these recordings available to parents. The school may, in its sole discretion, provide or be required to provide the recordings to law enforcement or other governmental agencies.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline means "to teach." At Village Montessori we use a positive discipline method. We acknowledge the things that our students are doing correctly and encourage them in that regard. Examples are: "You did it!" "Thank you for being so patient and cooperative." "Thank you for welcoming our visitor, that was so friendly." In addition, we use neutral moments to teach social skills through role plays, discussions, and skits so that the students practice appropriate language and actions before situations arise. A large piece of our curriculum is "Grace and Courtesy" which includes control of movement and manners. If a conflict occurs, we coach students in conflict-resolution and community-meeting skills. If a pattern of misbehavior continues, then we will contact the parents to help determine the cause and find solutions.

We follow an approach based on empowerment, mutual respect, and trust. Neither corporal punishment nor physical or emotional intimidation are allowed. If anyone consciously or flagrantly violates the social contract regarding safety, kindness, and courtesy, our response is to identify the appropriate and natural consequences of these actions.

We have worked together to create a system of ground rules and discipline that is firm, fair, and consistent to help students maintain the school's values and character. Village Montessori expects full cooperation from students and families during school hours or whenever the student/family represents the school.

## **BITING POLICY**

While biting is very upsetting for students and parents, it often occurs out of a child's frustration of being unable to express needs. At Village Montessori, we work with the child and parents to give alternative coping techniques. Parents need to be aware that if their child habitually bites, outside intervention may be required. The parents of both the biter and the child who was bitten will be informed when a biting incident has taken place. Appropriate steps will be taken depending on the severity and frequency of the bite.

## **SCHOOL DRESS CODE**

Village Montessori works very hard to create a safe physical environment and therefore asks that children wear the Village Montessori uniform including shoes that are suitable for running outside. Open-toed or open-backed shoes, very loose fitting shoes or shoes with wheels place a child's physical safety at risk.

Village Montessori requires a school uniform daily for toddler and preprimary students. Purchase uniforms at Land's End at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com) or (800) 963-4816

Infant Students (Monet):

- Infants are not required to wear school collared polo shirts, as these shirts are often not available in small sizes.
- Infants should dress in comfortable clothing that they move about in the environment. Please do not send onesies.
- Walking infants should wear closed-toed shoes with non-slip soles outdoors.

Toddler and Preliminary Students (Raphael, Michaelangelo, Degas, Britto, Picasso & Dali):

- Village Montessori collared polo with stitched logo from Land's End

- Toddler and Preprimary students should wear closed shoes with non-slip soles for outdoors and socks for indoors.
- Khaki or navy blue shorts or skorts (no jeans, no leggings)
  - Length: shorts/skorts should be suitable to the build and stature of the student and not be revealing
  - Fabric: close-weave cotton
- Please label all student clothing
- No clothing with holes or tears
- No outfits with tank tops or bare midriffs
- Jewelry can cause a significant distraction; therefore, we ask that students limit jewelry. We are not responsible for any lost or broken jewelry.
- Please keep an extra change of clothes in a wet/dry bag

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

Montessori materials are the focus of our students' attention during the school day. We ask that all toys and items that can cause distraction to be left at home or in the car. Precious items can easily get lost, misplaced or broken; therefore, we ask you to leave these items at home. Items related to the area of study, for example a bird's nest while studying birds, are welcome. No backpacks for the Killian and Britto campus as we do not have adequate storage space for them.

## **VISITING PROCEDURES**

At Village Montessori, we have an OPEN DOOR policy for our parents. However, during the first few months of the year our students are transitioning and we ask that you minimize your visits and use transparent classroom to see photos of your child. You are always welcome to call the main office and ask for an update.

## **LUNCH**

Village Montessori students bring their lunch to school daily in a clearly labeled lunch box. Please choose a lunchbox that your child can open independently. Cold packs are discouraged as the lunchbox becomes too heavy for the child to carry on their own. No pouches, easily accessible containers are encouraged.

Village Montessori community places a great emphasis on the importance of good nutrition. Lunch is a very important part of both your child's school day and health education. We count on you to work with us to teach the students about health and nutrition.

We discourage the use of "Lunchables" and other items that contain highly processed foods and candy with excessive packaging.

With younger children, it is a good idea to prepare food in small, easy-to-handle servings, such as cutting sandwiches into quarters, slicing fresh fruit, and preparing bite-size slices of cheese. Warm food should be sent in thermos. We don't have microwaves available to warm any food at our school.

Please do not send your child to school with sugary desserts or drinks, including soda. If you do want to send a prepared drink, please read the labels and send in milk or 100% fruit juice.

Please send juice or milk in a thermos or securely contained plastic container (no sippy cups please). We encourage you to place foods in a reusable or recyclable container.

Food sharing will not be allowed between students to ensure each child's safety and sanitation.

All uneaten food which can be contained will be sent home. Please monitor your child's lunchbox to determine likes or dislikes and to determine the correct amount of food to pack. We appreciate your care in preparing a healthy lunch.

## **LUNCH PROGRAM**

Tastylunchboxes catering: <https://www.tastylunchboxes.com/>

## **SNACKS**

Toddler and preprimary students have nutritional snacks in the morning and afternoons. The morning snack is provided through our community snack calendar. It is imperative that you bring your snack to share when you are assigned. The Department of Children & Families (DCF) requires snacks that include two of the four food groups. We have many food preparation lessons that include fruit, veggies, cheese, etc. We only serve water or 100% fruit juice.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES OR SPECIAL DIETARY RESTRICTIONS**

Some students may follow a special diet due to allergies, medical, religious, or personal reasons. Please be sure to notify the teachers if your child should

avoid certain foods. This will be considered in planning snacks, or on days when the class prepares its own lunch. Village Montessori will accommodate unique allergies and medical conditions when possible.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

- Parent Volunteers:** We offer several opportunities for parents to visit our schools and experience the magic that is being in a Montessori classroom throughout the year. Please reach out to the teachers if you are interested, it can be as simple as coming to our schools to read a book to the children.
- Parent Conferences:** There will be two scheduled conferences throughout the school year. These conferences will occur at the beginning of the year and at the end. The child's individual teacher will send out conference notices. If at any time during the year you wish to schedule an additional conference, please contact your child's teacher to make arrangements. During school hours our staff is attending to the children, so we ask that specific questions are addressed during conference time.
- Parent Seminars:** Village Montessori firmly believes that Montessori is a way of life that should be lived out at home as well in the classroom. It is imperative that the ideas your child encounters at Village Montessori be fostered at home. Village Montessori will offer parent seminars to help parents gain insight on the teachings of Maria Montessori and to acquire a better understanding of what their child is accomplishing within the unique Montessori environment. These seminars will further help parents to promote Montessori at home and in all areas of the child's life. Notices will be sent out as to the dates and times. Please make it a point to attend, as these seminars provide valuable information.

## PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

**Take Home Folders:** Your child will have a personal take home folder sent home every day for the preschoolers and every Friday for toddlers. Inside the folder is your child's work for the week and important correspondence from the school. The empty folders should be returned every Monday.

**Transparent classroom:** We selected this platform specifically because it is designed with the Montessori method in mind. Our team has meticulously uploaded many of the lessons you will see used within our environments. This feature offers you, as a parent, not only the chance to receive updates and photos but also to deepen your understanding of the Montessori method. Such knowledge empowers you to be a more active participant in your child's educational journey.

### Creating an Account

To sign up, visit the Transparent Classroom website provided by our school. Click on the "Sign Up" link and fill in the required information, including your email address and a secure password. If the school has already set up an account for you, you will receive an email invitation with instructions on how to set your password. Once your account is created or set up by the school, log in using your email and password. You will be directed to your personal dashboard.

### Navigating the Dashboard

When you log in, you'll see the dashboard, your home base for accessing all features. The calendar allows you to view upcoming school events and important dates.

### Viewing Your Child's Progress

Underneath the "progress" tab, you may see what activities your child has been presented, is practicing, and has mastered.

### Communicating with Teachers

Each classroom has a designated email to communicate with teachers.

### Calendar and Events

Our calendar is found on our website [www.montessorischoolmiami.com/calendar](http://www.montessorischoolmiami.com/calendar)

## Tips and Troubleshooting

If you have trouble logging in, try resetting your password using the 'Forgot Password' link on the login page. Ensure that your browser is up to date to avoid compatibility issues. For further assistance, please contact our school's main office. They can help direct your queries about using the platform.

We look forward to partnering with you on this educational journey!