

2021 - 2022

# School Handbook



# sagebrush

M O N T E S S O R I

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# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Welcome.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction to Sagebrush Montessori .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Mission.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>History .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>School Organization.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Equal Opportunities; Statement of Non-Discrimination .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Philosophy.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>Course Overview: Children’s House .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Children’s House School Day.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Arrival .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Dismissal.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Full Day.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Extended Day Care in the Club Room .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Snack and Lunch .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>Aspects of the Children’s House Experience.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Absences .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Birthdays.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Clothing.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Discipline and Social/Emotional Development .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Holidays .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Lost and Found .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>Course Overview: Elementary .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>Homework .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Assessment .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>The Elementary School Day .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Arrival .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Dismissal.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Extended Day Care.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Snack and Lunch .....</i>	<i>15</i>

<b>Aspects of the Elementary Child’s Experience</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<i>Absences</i> .....	16
<i>Birthdays</i> .....	16
<i>Holidays</i> .....	17
<i>Going out</i> .....	17
<i>Clothing and Personal Belongings</i> .....	17
<i>Student Conduct</i> .....	17
<b>Health and Safety</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<i>Illness and Communicable Disease</i> .....	19
<i>Immunizations</i> .....	19
<i>Medications</i> .....	20
<i>Life Threatening Conditions</i> .....	20
<i>Emergencies</i> .....	21
<i>Lice</i> .....	21
<i>Weapons Free Zone, Tobacco Use Policy</i> .....	21
<i>Locked Door Policy</i> .....	21
<i>Hand Washing</i> .....	21
<i>Fieldtrip Policy</i> .....	21
<i>Neighborhood Walks</i> .....	22
<b>Communication Between School and Family</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<i>Appointments</i> .....	22
<i>Parent Teacher Conferences</i> .....	22
<i>Class News and Take-Home Folders</i> .....	22
<i>Email and Transparent Classroom</i> .....	22
<i>Phone Calls and Messages</i> .....	23
<i>Events and Documents</i> .....	23
<b>Parent/Guardian Involvement</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<i>Cell Phone Use</i> .....	23
<i>Code of Conduct</i> .....	23
<i>Grievance/Complaint Procedure</i> .....	24
<i>Observations and Access</i> .....	24
<i>Divorced/Separated Parents</i> .....	24
<i>Fundraising</i> .....	25
<i>Volunteering</i> .....	25

<i>Staff Appreciation</i> .....	26
<b>Re-enrollment Policies and Procedures</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<i>Continued Enrollment Forms</i> .....	26
<i>Final Year Commitment</i> .....	27
<i>Sibling Enrollment Policy</i> .....	27
<i>Enrollment in the Elementary Program</i> .....	27
<i>Notification of Admission Status</i> .....	27
<b>Payment and Billing information</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<i>Tuition and Fees</i> .....	28
<i>Sibling Discounts</i> .....	28
<i>Payment Options</i> .....	29
<i>Returned Check Policy</i> .....	29
<b>Weather Emergencies and School Closures/Delays</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<i>Inclement Weather / Snow Days</i> .....	29
<i>Emergencies</i> .....	29
<b>COVID-19 Health and Wellness Policies</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<i>Face Mask Requirements</i> .....	30
<i>Temperature and Symptom guidelines</i> .....	31
<i>Screening Procedures</i> .....	32
<i>Required Absence Policy</i> .....	32
<i>Protocols for Cleaning and Disinfecting</i> .....	32
<i>Physical Distancing Strategies</i> .....	32
<i>Healthy Hand Hygiene</i> .....	33
Use of Hand Sanitizer .....	33
<i>Ventilation</i> .....	34
<i>Community Events &amp; Gatherings</i> .....	34
<i>Communication</i> .....	34

# Sagebrush Montessori

*Children's House*  
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*Elementary*  
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## Welcome

Welcome to Sagebrush Montessori. We are excited to be on this journey with you. It is because of your interest and effort that we are able to offer traditional Montessori education for children ages 3 to 12.

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you with our school's policies, procedures, and guidelines. Please save this for your reference – it has important information about your child's education. If there is something that needs clarification, or if there is something missing that you would like to see in the handbook in the future, please let us know. Your understanding of why we do what we do is important to your child's education.

We look forward to a year of growth and discovery with you and your child.

## Introduction to Sagebrush Montessori

### Mission

Our mission is to provide children ages 3 – 12 with a traditional Montessori education in a warm and nurturing environment where we celebrate each child as an individual and embrace religious and cultural differences.

### History

Sagebrush Montessori Preschool and Kindergarten was founded by Karin Hines. Karin began her career in Germany where she received her Early Childhood Education degree. After meeting her husband, she moved to the Pacific Northwest. She found work as a classroom assistant in a Montessori school and fell in love with the teaching philosophy. In 1983, she began her Montessori training at Montessori NW in Portland, Oregon. Karin worked as primary guide for 11 years before opening her own school. Sagebrush Montessori opened its doors in 1996 and has been offering families an authentic Montessori education for their children ever since.

In 2012 a group of parents dreamed of creating a Montessori elementary classroom their children. With a strong vision and fierce determination, they established a non-profit board and began the process of opening a Montessori elementary program. Through the startup process, the founding members relied heavily on Karin's experience and they worked closely with her to shape the school and establish high standards for quality. Sagebrush Elementary opened its doors just a year later in the Fall of 2013 with Samantha May, née Garbush, as the lead elementary guide.

Sagebrush Montessori and Sagebrush Elementary continued to thrive and grow together as a community. In the spring of 2018, Karin retired from her long, celebrated career as an owner, director, and guide at Sagebrush Montessori. The school board embraced the opportunity to establish one community and, in the fall of 2018 Sagebrush Montessori and Sagebrush Elementary became known collectively as Sagebrush Montessori with Samantha May moving into the Head of School position. In the fall of 2021, Sagebrush Montessori will welcome nearly 100 students, 75 families, and 15 staff members through its doors.

## School Organization

Sagebrush Montessori is a non-profit organization. We are registered as a 501(c) (3) with the United States government and as a non-profit in the State of Washington. A Board of Directors, who give their services without remuneration, supervises the School. While the Board is responsible for the business and financial affairs of the school, the day-to-day operation of the school is under the direction of the Head of School, Childcare Director, and Administrative Coordinator. In addition, we rely on consistent and regular support from Parent Volunteers.

If you are interested in board membership, contact the Head of School, Samantha May.

Sagebrush Montessori's elementary program is recognized as an approved private school by the State of Washington's Board of Education and has attained recognition by Association Montessori International/USA. Childcare at the Children's House campus is licensed by the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families.

Up to date information about our current board members, administrative staff, and teaching staff is available on the school website at <http://www.sagebrushmontessori.org>

## Equal Opportunities; Statement of Non-Discrimination

Sagebrush Montessori complies with all State and Federal rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or military status. This holds true for all Sagebrush Montessori employment and educational programs.

## Philosophy

Sagebrush Montessori subscribes to an educational philosophy created and developed by Maria Montessori over one hundred years ago. On January 6, 2007, the world celebrated the centennial anniversary of the first Montessori school in Rome, Italy. Today Montessori education continues as the product of long and careful hours of ongoing research. Through our awareness of how children develop, we create environments that meet their special needs.

An essential part of the Montessori teaching method is a thoughtfully prepared environment that is beautiful and orderly. The classroom is outfitted with carefully prepared and sequenced materials meant to meet each child at their particular level of development. Through skillful observation, the adult is prepared to offer children instruction that will stimulate their interest and activity. The special relationship between child and adult in the Montessori classroom is perhaps best conveyed by these words of a young child: "Help me to do it myself."

Our classrooms are multi-age. Mixing ages is an important component of the Montessori philosophy. It allows for more individualized work and for students to move through the curriculum at their own pace in a non-competitive environment. Older students have a chance to be role models, while younger students have the benefit of a more stimulating environment.

In the Children's House (CH) our goal is to help develop each child's interest and abilities. We guide children towards engagement, concentration, purposefulness and respectful behavior. Children will also work on learning how to engage in a "work cycle": to choose a work, work purposefully and with concentration, and

clean up after themselves. We encourage children to be independent whenever possible and assist a child only as needed.

In the Elementary (EL) students will continue the process begun in the CH. At this stage of development there is an intense interest for social learning and the lessons and activities in the classroom offer constant opportunities for children to work together. Children continue to develop their work habits and experience extended periods of concentration.

Elementary students have a strong drive to work collaboratively. A child's teacher will respect this developmental need and encourage group work and support students with independent problem solving and completion of work within the social community. As the child's knowledge and skills grow over the six years, so does the complexity of their work. The adults will support this by offering appropriate lessons, encouragement, assisting work and research, offering creative suggestions and helping children problem solve. Through "Cosmic Education" we aim to connect a child with their passions and abilities as well as their relationship to the community outside of the classroom.

## Course Overview: Children's House

From: Kahn, David, et al. *The Whole-School Montessori Handbook: for Teachers and Administrators*. NAMTA, 1999.

The Children's House is a "living room" for children. Children choose their work from among self-correcting materials displayed on open shelves and they work in specific work areas. Over a period of time, the children develop into a "normalized community," working with high concentration and few interruptions. *Normalization* is the process whereby a child moves from being undisciplined to self-disciplined, from disordered to ordered, from distracted to focused, through work in the environment. The process occurs through repeated work with materials that captivate the child's attention. For some children this inner change may take place quite suddenly, leading to deep concentration. In the Montessori Children's House, academic competency is a means to an end, and the manipulatives are viewed as "materials for development."

In the Montessori Children's House, five distinct areas constitute the prepared environment:

- **Practical Life** enhances the development of hand-eye coordination, gross motor control, and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, development of social relations, and coordination of physical movement.
- The **Sensorial** area enables the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, pitch, etc.
- **Mathematics** makes use of manipulative materials to enable the child to internalize concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations and memorization of basic facts.
- **Language arts** includes oral language development, written expression, reading, the study of grammar, creative dramatics, and children's literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through a variety of presentations, allowing children to link sounds and letter symbols effortlessly and to express their thoughts through writing.
- **Cultural activities** expose the child to basics in geography, history, life sciences, and earth sciences. Music, art, and movement are part of the integrated cultural curriculum.

The Children's House environment unifies the social, physical, and intellectual functioning of the child. Its important function is to provide children with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security and a sense of order, pride in the physical environment, abiding curiosity, a habit of concentration, habits of initiative and persistence, the ability to make decisions, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school, and community. This foundation will enable them to acquire more knowledge and skills throughout their school career.

# The Children's House School Day

7:30 – 8:45 a.m.	Early Morning Care in the Club Room
8:45 – 9:00 a.m.	Morning Drop Off (no admittance after 9:00 a.m. unless prior arrangements made)
9:00 – 12:00 p.m.	Morning Work Period (includes outdoor play time)
12:00 p.m.	Morning Students Dismissal
12:00 – 1:15 p.m.	Lunch and Outdoor Playtime for Full Day Students and Club Room Students
1:15 – 3:00 p.m.	Afternoon Work Period for Full Day Students Rest Time and Free Choice for Club Room Students
3:00 p.m.	Afternoon Dismissal
3:00 – 5:30 p.m.	After School Care in the Club Room
5:30	Final Pick-Up Time

*Full Day Students attend class Monday through Friday. Morning Students attend class Tuesday through Friday.*

## Arrival

Students will enter through their exterior classroom doors. For the Garden Room, this is on the south side of the building down the walkway past the main entrance. For the Travertine Room this is the exterior door on the north side of the school building.

Drop off time is between 8:45 and 9:00 a.m. Families should follow all COVID-19 screening procedures, which will be outlined before the start of the school year. Upon arriving staff will take your child's temperature. If your child has a temperature higher than 100.0°F, we will wait 5 minutes and screen a second time. If their temperature reading is still 100.0°F, we will ask you to take your child home and follow the Required Absence time outlined in the school's COVID-19 Health and Wellness protocols.

For safety reasons, school doors will be locked after 9:00. To ensure staff are free and available to do provide health checks, any arrival after 9:00 must be pre-arranged with the administration. No late arrivals will be admitted without prior arrangement. Unless your child is enrolled in Early Morning Care, we ask that you do not request access to the school building before 8:45.

When you drop off your child, make sure the child has been greeted and acknowledged by a staff member in the morning, and has said goodbye to a staff person in the afternoon. Never leave your child unattended.

If your child is enrolled in Early Morning Care, a staff member will sign your child in noting your name and the time you are dropping off. When arriving at After School Care, staff will sign children in for afternoon sessions and out when parents pick up.

## Dismissal

### ***From the classroom***

Children from the Garden Classroom will be dismissed from the gated entrance on the south side of the building. Children from the Travertine Classroom will be dismissed from the door on the north side of their classroom.

***For pickup from the Club Room (Between 12:00 and 5:30)***

Children can be picked up from the main entrance. At the 3:00 dismissal, Club Room staff will open the door when the children are ready to be dismissed. At all other times, please ring the doorbell to alert staff to your arrival. Be respectful of the work of the children within the Club Room space. When you arrive, staff will let your child know it is time to finish and put work away. It is important that you allow reasonable time for your child to pack away and gather their things.

## Full Day

In the Children's House "Full Day" is from 12:00 – 3:00 in the classroom. Full day classes are for children who are ready to extend their work hours, both with respect to energy (no longer needing a nap) and in having an interest in having more time for classroom activities. Morning students will be invited to join the class for a full day when the classroom guide believes a child is ready.

All children in their 5-6 or "kindergarten" year are expected to stay for a full day. It is a great source of joy for the child of this age to have time with the group of older peers in their classroom community.

## Extended Day Care in the Club Room

Sagebrush Montessori offers childcare to students currently enrolled at the Children's House. Childcare is offered on a first come, first served basis. Childcare contracts are for the duration of the school year and are not subject to sibling discounts. Payments will be included with tuition for your convenience.

Please contact our Childcare Director, Jen ([jen@sagebrushmontessori.org](mailto:jen@sagebrushmontessori.org)) for times, pricing, and availability.

For the 2021-2022 there will be limited drop-in care available. Childcare is not available on "No School" days.

## Snack and Lunch

**Sagebrush Montessori is a nut free school. This includes peanuts and tree-nuts.**

Each child will be provided their own drinking glass for staying hydrated throughout the day. A healthy snack will be prepared by staff and available throughout the morning. Healthy snacks may include fresh fruit or vegetables, cheese and crackers, popcorn, a hardboiled egg, yogurt, etc. Additional options will be available for those with special dietary needs.

Full day students will have a "formal" lunch. Children will lay out a placemat, napkin, and utensils as needed. They will lay food out on their placemat to eat and clean up by washing their placemat and table and sweeping their floor.

Please send lunch in a bag or box that your child can open independently. Many lunch boxes, containers, thermoses and even plastic wrap can be hard for a child to open without assistance. We recommend against foods in "squeeze pouches" as these can be messy and limit independence. Please transfer contents to a spoon friendly container if you wish to include them in your child's lunch. Please include a cloth napkin and utensils daily.

Choosing fresh, home assembled food sends a valuable message to children every day about food sources, healthy eating, and sustainability. Fixing a lunch at night, rather than in the morning, may offer your child the time and opportunity to assist in preparing their own lunch. Prepare food that does not need to be heated, and use a cold pack if food needs to be kept cold.

No sweets (cookies, candies, sodas etc.). Instead, a small picture you make or a note that your child can read is a wonderful treat in their lunch bag.

Menu Ideas:

<i>Protein:</i>	Meat, poultry, seafood, beans (including soy), peas, and eggs. Examples include ham, tuna fish, black beans, edamame, hard boiled eggs and seed butters.
<i>Vegetables:</i>	Broccoli, bell peppers, kale chips, sweet potato, cauliflower, avocado, green beans, radishes, celery, etc.
<i>Fruits:</i>	Berries, melon, apple slices, bananas, grapes, mangoes, peaches, raisins, etc.
<i>Grains:</i>	Whole wheat bread, whole wheat crackers, brown rice, popcorn, oatmeal, etc.
<i>Dairy:</i>	Milk, cheese, yogurt, etc.

## Aspects of the Children's House Experience

### Absences

If your child will be absent or tardy, please notify the school via email at [attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org](mailto:attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org). In your email, please note your child's full name, their classroom, and the reason for their absence. In case of illness, please alert the school to the nature of the illness. The information will go directly to the school office and the office will notify your child's teacher. In the case of a planned tardy, please email 24 hours in advance to ensure staff are available to greet you and your child and perform a wellness check.

In the case of pre-planned vacations, notify the school as soon as possible at [attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org](mailto:attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org) for teacher planning purposes.

### Birthdays

At Sagebrush Montessori, each classroom has a unique way of honoring a child on the day of their birth. Some students may choose to make a timeline of their life, others may want to share a piece of interesting work, and some might be interviewed for a personally written biography. Your child's guide will discuss birthday celebrations at Back-to-School Night in greater detail.

Please note, this is not a birthday party at school, but an observation of your child's special day. If a family chooses to bring in a birthday snack, please be sure it is a healthy option for the whole class.

Summer birthdays will be celebrated as "half birthdays" during the winter months.

Children often like to make an imprint on the class: it is special for them to know they have given something that will be kept permanently in the classroom. A child's birthday is a wonderful time to give a book or musical cd to the classroom.

If your child is having a party outside of school, please do not hand out invitations at school unless the whole class is invited. These situations can be upsetting for those not invited. To avoid hurt feelings, please mail invitations or contact parents directly.

## Clothing

**Independence in dressing:** Learning to dress and undress is an important part of your child's growing self-reliance. When purchasing clothes for your child, please consider zippers, snaps, straps and buttons. Choose those which your child can independently manage.

**Distractions:** Send your child in clothing that is free of distractions to others. Shoes with flashing lights or bells should not be worn to school.

**All clothes must be labeled:** Mark your child's clothes with their name in an indelible pen or sewn on labels. All unmarked clothing will be placed on the classroom coatracks. If not claimed after a reasonable amount of time, it will be donated to charity or used at the staff's discretion.

**Safety:** Patent leather shoes, high heeled, or platform shoes are dangerous and a deterrent to active participation in all aspects of school activities. All footwear should have a secure back strap.

**A change of clothes:** Send a complete change of clothes with your child's name on each item, to be left at school in case of "accidents". Labeled clothing should be in a gallon sized zip top bag with your child's name on the outside. A full supply of clothing, including an extra cloth face covering, should always be in your child's classroom.

## Discipline and Social/Emotional Development

Sagebrush Montessori is a place where we model a culture of grace and courtesy. Significant time is devoted to creating a peaceful environment for everybody. Should guidance be needed, our plan is as follows:

- Redirection and clear limits are given
- Constant compassionate assistance in self-control, self-esteem, and respect for others and the environment
- Parents will be notified if these methods do not work

When a problem or misunderstanding arises, we use the following procedure:

1. **Redirect:** Children struggling with self-control will be redirected to more positive constructive activities.
2. **Natural and logical consequences:** Children consistently struggling with behavior or self-control may lose privileges, be restricted in their interactions with peers, or may have added responsibilities to restore order as related to the behavior in question.
3. **Removal from situation:** If a child is destructive or hurtful towards others or themselves, they will be removed from the situation until they are able to regain self-control. Once they have had the space and time to regain control, they will be given a chance to express themselves appropriately and be given support to resolve the conflict.
4. **Situations requiring immediate action:** If a child displays behaviors that are deemed hazardous or overly disruptive, the staff may contact the child's parents/guardian to remove them from Sagebrush Montessori for the day. The Head of School, child's guide, and parents will meet to determine if any further action is necessary.

## Holidays

The Montessori philosophy reflects universal acceptance of all people and appreciation of differences. Cultural diversity is well represented and highly valued at Sagebrush Montessori. Holidays are explored culturally and historically as special times for sharing traditions.

We emphasize the celebratory nature of holidays, encouraging community participation, understanding, and appreciation. Child initiated activities, discussions and questions are supported, and parents are encouraged to talk with their children about their personal beliefs regarding specific holidays and traditions.

### **Lost and Found**

Out of respect for our limited storage space, a “Lost & Found” is not kept at the school. Items left behind will be held for a brief period, then discarded or donated to charity. We want to encourage everyone to keep track of their personal possessions.

## Course Overview: Elementary

*From: Kahn, David, et al. The Whole-School Montessori Handbook: for Teachers and Administrators. NAMTA, 1999.*

The elementary program offers a continuum built on the preschool experience. As in the pre-school, the Montessori materials are a means to an end. They are intended to evoke the imagination, to aid abstraction, to generate a world view about the human task and purpose. The child works within a philosophical system, asking questions about the origins of the universe, the nature of life, people and their differences, and so on. On a factual basis, interdisciplinary studies combine geological, biological, and anthropological science in the study of natural history and world ecology. The environment reflects a new stage of development and offers the following:

- Integration of the arts, sciences, geography, history, and language that evokes the natural imagination and abstraction of the elementary child.
- Presentation of knowledge as part of a large-scale narrative that reveals the origins of the earth, life, human communities, and modern history, always in the context of the wholeness of life. Presentation of the formal scientific language of zoology, botany, anthropology, geography, geology, etc., exposing the child to accurate, organized information and respecting the child's intelligence and interests.
- Connective narratives that provide an inspiring overview as the organizing, integrating "Great Lessons." Great lessons span the history of the universe from the big bang theory of the origin of the solar system, earth, and life forms to the emergence of human cultures and the rise of civilization. Aided by impressionistic charts and timelines, the child's study of detail in reference to the Great Lessons leads to awe and respect for the totality of knowledge.
- The use of timelines, pictures, charts and other visual aids to provide linguistic and visual overview of the first principles of each discipline.
- A mathematics curriculum presented with concrete materials that simultaneously reveal arithmetic, geometric, and algebraic correlations. This curriculum recognizes the child's need for experience, for repetition, for various levels of concreteness, for going from concrete to symbol to abstraction. The emphasis is on making formulae and rules a point of arrival and discovery, not a point of departure.
- An emphasis on creative writing, expository writing, interpretive reading of literature, research with primary sources, grammar and sentence analysis, spelling based on cultural studies and usage, and oral expression for both sharing research and dramatic productions.
- Montessori trained adults who are "enlightened generalists" – teachers who are able to integrate the teaching of all subjects, not as isolated disciplines, but as part of a whole intellectual tradition.
- Emphasis on open-ended research that is student generated and teacher guided. Students are encouraged to wonder, to carry out research, to experiment, to develop knowledge, make observations, to demonstrate skills. This in-depth study uses primary and secondary sources as well as other materials. Textbooks and worksheets, if present at all, are used by the children as reference materials, not as a basis for assigned or ongoing work.
- "Going out" to make use of community resources beyond the four walls of the classroom.

Studies are integrated not only in terms of subject matter but in terms of moral learning as well, resulting in appreciation and respect for life, moral empathy, and a fundamental belief in progress, the contribution of the individual, the universality of the human condition, and the meaning of true justice.

## Homework

Generally speaking, *homework* refers to academic work. However, we Montessori educators like to broaden the term: all work that is done at home is *homework*. For both grown-ups and children alike, homework can be defined as the work we do to improve ourselves, or work done to pursue our own interests and dreams. This may be an extension of work or school, or it could be an unrelated activity or hobby meaningful to us as an individual. Often the line between *work* and *play* can become fuzzy here, just as the work that the children do at school is often *fun*.

When children leave school at the end of the day, Sagebrush Montessori hopes that they will have some time to relax, and we expect that they will do some work as well. Our homework expectations are as follows:

- Activities appropriate to family life and the home environment: see handout “Suggested home and family responsibilities for the elementary child” passed out on Back-to-School night.
- Continuation of both academic work and self-development:
  - A love of reading is the single best indicator of and influence on academic success. Reading and being read to daily are thus very important. For elementary children, consider these activities as standard homework.
  - Children may receive spelling words and math facts to memorize. The spelling memorization work will often include the use of a rule. Children will then work with that rule and memorize some applicable words. Both math facts and spelling rules are important works for the elementary aged child to grasp.
  - Projects of the child’s own choosing, whether related to topics being explored at school or to other interests.

## Assessment

Parents are naturally interested in how their child's progress compares to local and national expectations and standards. When we assess children, we consider the whole child, including strengths and limitations as well as social, physical, and creative achievements in order to provide a qualitative view of your child. Traditional grades provide a quantitative evaluation of your child’s work and create an environment of winners and losers, undermining the spirit of cooperation and creativity. Furthermore, research indicates that grading actually reduces creativity, as children aim for work that will be safe and acceptable to the adult. This leads us to another reason why we choose not to use traditional grades: children begin to work for the adult rather than themselves, to work for extrinsic rewards instead of intrinsic. For these reasons, Sagebrush Montessori does not “grade” children. Your child's guide will be using a variety of assessment methods to individualize your child's instruction. Some of these methods are described below.

- ***Student Lead Portfolios:*** Children in the elementary classroom begin to keep a record of their work. This may take the form of a file folder, work plan, charts and graphs, a scrapbook/journal, or a combination of these. The child still has the freedom to choose their own work within the units of study. Keeping track of their work helps them make good choices, lets them visualize their progress, and provides a way for them to document accomplishments to share with their parents.
- ***Classroom-based Assessments:*** Assessment is at the forefront of the Elementary Montessori classroom, though it does not look like traditional testing. Children work through lessons and units by mastering concepts. Some assessments are more formal, such as one-to-one reading assessments conducted by the guide. Other assessments are less formal but still very informative. The guide might take observational notes as they observe a student solving a problem or collect illustrative examples of

student work to analyze and share with parents. Having a full understanding of every child's current zone of proximal development will help guide the teacher as they prepare lessons and activities. These classroom assessments are summarized and shared with parents during parent-teacher conferences which are held twice a year.

- **Formal Testing:** Beginning in the third year of lower elementary, children will be offered the opportunity to participate in a formal testing situation. This may include tests handwritten by the guide that follow the curriculum as well as local and nationally distributed tests. Tests will be hand-scored, and results will be shared with the family. At Sagebrush Montessori, we believe that a child has multiple intelligences, not just those measured by achievement tests. While we regard tests as a reflection of how your child might compare to others in particular areas, we don't believe that tests provide a complete assessment of your child's strengths or limitations. Areas of achievement and difficulty will be noted in your child's most current conference report as well as other valuable information about your child's performance.
- **Conference Reports:** You will receive two written conference reports each year. These reports will be reviewed with you in person during fall and spring conferences with your child's guide. Throughout the year, if you have questions about your child's progress, please contact the lead guide for a discussion.

## The Elementary School Day

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.	Early Morning Care
8:30 – 8:45 a.m.	School Arrival Time (tardy after 8:45 a.m.)
8:45 – 12:00 p.m.	Morning Work Period
12:00 – 1:15 p.m.	Lunch and Outdoor Playtime
1:15 – 3:15p.m.	Afternoon Work Period
3:15 p.m.	Afternoon Dismissal
3:15 – 5:30 p.m.	After School Care
5:30	Final Pick-Up Time

### Arrival

Students will enter through their exterior classroom doors. For the Lower Elementary, this is on the south side of the building at the "kitchen" door. For the Upper Elementary, this is on the west side of the building near Frankfort Park.

Drop off time is between 8:30 and 8:45 a.m. Families should follow all COVID-19 screening procedures, which will be outlined before the start of the school year. Upon arriving staff will take your child's temperature. If your child has a temperature higher than 100.0°F, we will wait 5 minutes and screen a second time. If their temperature reading is still 100.0°F, we will ask you to take your child home and follow the Required Absence time outlined in the school's COVID-19 Health and Wellness protocols.

For safety reasons, school doors will be locked outside of arrival time windows. To ensure staff are free and available to provide health checks, any arrival outside of scheduled arrival times must be pre-arranged with the administration. No late arrivals will be admitted without prior arrangement.

When you drop off your child, make sure the child has been greeted and acknowledged by a staff member in the morning, and has said goodbye to a staff person in the afternoon. Never leave your child unattended.

If your child is enrolled in Early Morning Care, a staff member will sign your child in noting your name and the time you are dropping off. When arriving at After School Care, staff will sign children in from the school day and out when picked up from afternoon sessions.

## Dismissal

Children will exit the classroom and wait for their ride in the school's driveway. All drivers should park along the south side of Frankfort St. to the west of the school driveway. Children will be released when their ride has reached the front of the pickup line. The pickup line will proceed forward as the first car departs. The next car will receive its students and depart, allowing the line to move forward. If you need to exit your vehicle for any reason, please pull as far forward as possible before parking to the east of the driveway, so as to not disrupt the pickup line. For the safety of the children and to be good neighbors, please only park on the south side of Frankfort St. You MAY NOT park in the driveway.

If you need to pick up your child before dismissal, please notify the school in advance via email at [attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org](mailto:attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org)

## Extended Day Care

Sagebrush Montessori offers childcare to students currently enrolled in the Elementary program. Childcare is offered on a first come, first served basis. Childcare contracts are for the duration of the school year and are not subject to sibling discounts. Payments will be included with tuition for your convenience.

Please contact our Childcare Director, Jen ([jen@sagebrushmontessori.org](mailto:jen@sagebrushmontessori.org)) for times, pricing, and availability.

For the 2021-2022 school year, there will be limited drop-in care available. Childcare is not available on "No School" days.

## Snack and Lunch

**Sagebrush Montessori is a nut free school. This includes peanuts and tree-nuts.**

One's eating habits, healthy or otherwise, are established in childhood. As part of their work with students, guides will incorporate conversations about the significance of healthy eating with regard to growth and development, concentration and focus, energy, etc. They will encourage healthy eating habits and share information about nutrition through lessons and class meetings.

The principles we strive to promote are:

- Appropriately sized servings
- Low salt, low sugar and low cholesterol foods
- Avoidance of fried foods
- Lots of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole grain foods rather than refined foods
- Whole fruits over juices
- The importance of fiber
- Protein from meat, fish, beans, dairy products

Based on these principles, items with excessive amounts of added sugar may be sent home at the discretion of the guide.

At Sagebrush we make it a goal to work on the grace and courtesy of sharing meals together in these ways:

- Setting aside a special place for children to eat snack as they wish
- Teaching of table manners
- Cleaning up to make the table ready for the next activity

The children are learning about the environment, recycling, and composting. We encourage you to use reusable containers and avoid excessive packaging. Elementary children should help prepare their own lunch until they are able to do it themselves. Involving them in shopping and planning meals is important in their ownership of what they eat.

During times of in person learning, children should bring their own healthy snack. Examples of snacks include apples and cheese, bagels with cream cheese, crackers and hummus, popcorn and trail mix.

If your child is in full day childcare, or we are in a phase of full time in person learning, children should also bring a fully prepared, healthy lunch. The children do not have access to a microwave; thus we encourage the use of wide mouthed thermoses for warm food. The children will not have access to a refrigerator, so we encourage the use of icepacks for food that should remain cold.

## Aspects of the Elementary Child's Experience

### Absences

If your child will be absent or tardy, please notify the school via email at [attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org](mailto:attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org). In your email, please note your child's full name, their classroom, and the reason for their absence. In case of illness, please alert the school to the nature of the illness. The information will go directly to the school office and the office will notify your child's teacher. In the case of a planned tardy, please email 24 hours in advance to ensure staff are available to greet you and your child and perform a wellness check.

In the case of pre-planned vacations, notify the school as soon as possible at [attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org](mailto:attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org) for teacher planning purposes.

### Birthdays

At Sagebrush Montessori, each classroom has a unique way of honoring a child on the day of their birth. Some students may choose to make a timeline of their life, others may want to share a piece of interesting work, and some might be interviewed for a personally written biography. Your child's guide will discuss birthday celebrations at Back-to-School Night in greater detail.

Please note, this is not a birthday party at school, but an observation of your child's special day. If a family chooses to bring in a birthday snack, please be sure it is a healthy option for the whole class.

Summer birthdays will be celebrated as "half birthdays" during the winter months.

Children often like to make an imprint on the class: it is special for them to know they have given something that will be kept permanently in the classroom. A child's birthday is a wonderful time to give a book or musical cd to the classroom.

## Holidays

The Montessori philosophy reflects universal acceptance of all people and appreciation of differences. Cultural diversity is well represented and highly valued at Sagebrush Elementary. Holidays are explored culturally and historically as special times for sharing traditions.

We emphasize the celebratory nature of holidays, encouraging community participation, understanding, and appreciation. Child initiated activities, discussions and questions are supported, and parents are encouraged to talk with their children about their personal beliefs with regard to specific holidays and traditions.

## Going out

Montessori elementary education has a unique emphasis on encouraging children to go outside of the classroom to access information and/or resources for information. Dr. Montessori wrote that at this age "the closed classroom can no longer be sufficient." So, in addition to field trips, 'going out' becomes a frequent occurrence. Going out is essentially a small group or individual, interest-based field trip to some location outside the classroom whether it be a simple trip to the library or a well-planned visit to meet a geologist at PNNL.

At the early elementary level, we focus on giving students the tools they will need to go out. Skills such as phone etiquette and map reading are a part of the student's preparation. As these skills develop, the scope of the going out experiences tends to widen. First and second year students may mainly focus on planning trips to the library to gather additional resource material. Older students visit a variety of locations throughout the community in search of experts, museums, natural habitats, organizations and so forth that will contribute to their area of interest. All students in the elementary program are welcome to arrange going outs as their interest and confidence allows.

In addition to field trips and going outs, children will have the opportunity to attend a 3 day/2-night science trip in the spring. A mandatory meeting for new parents will be held in the early spring to discuss the program details.

***For the 2021 – 2022 school year both going-outs and field trips will be temporarily suspended until further notice.***

## Clothing and Personal Belongings

Students' clothing should be simple, comfortable and non-offensive, while reflecting good judgment. Tennis or gym shoes are required for physical education for all students, along with appropriate clothing for outdoor activities. Please send adequate outerwear, including gloves and hats, when the weather is cold and/or wet.

Children are welcome to bring slippers or flip flops for indoor use only. These can be stored at school. We don't wear hats inside while classes are in session. If toys are brought to school, they must remain in the child's backpack in order to minimize disruption to the learning environment. Children are encouraged to leave all jewelry and valuables at home. Sagebrush Montessori will not be held responsible for lost or damaged items.

Specific field trips and special days may require "dressing up." We always give advance notice.

## Student Conduct

At the elementary level our goal is to:

- Balance the freedom and responsibility of the individual with the need for cooperation, order, restraint, and goodwill within the group
- Provide an environment where young people will experience encouragement, affirmation, and community as well as personal responsibility
- Ensure for each student's physical and psychological safety
- Enable each student to develop a high standard of moral integrity, gained through growth in self-discipline and personal responsibility
- Help students grow into mature, responsible adults
- Maintain a high standard for student behavior that reflects positively on the self, family, school and community
- Nurture each student with loving firmness, respect and fairness.

Sagebrush Montessori expects each student to:

- Treat others with respect and dignity
- Treat themselves with that same respect
- Respect both the work and property of others, and to bring only the necessary items to school
- Have consistent attendance and punctual arrival

The philosophy of discipline at the elementary level is one of positive reinforcement and redirection; therefore, it is our belief that adults model the behavior they wish children to learn. Important goals for students include independence and self-discipline. Guides work with all children to establish ground rules and to solve conflicts peacefully.

At this age level we are working with your child on personal responsibility. We try to teach that each individual is responsible for his or her own actions, words, work, body, etc. If we allow children to live out the natural consequences of their actions, we are helping them develop the mental and moral independence they need. Please help your child by allowing them the dignity of accepting personal responsibility for all situations.

Patterns of behavior that are deemed harmful to self and/or others may be resolved by asking the student to leave school for the remainder of the day. This is a drastic but effective method of solving some behavioral difficulties. If limits are repeatedly tested, parents are again requested to take the child home. To return to school, the student, parents, guide and Head of School must agree on a plan of action. If discipline problems persist, Sagebrush Montessori will ask the student to leave our community. If you, the parent or guardian, disagree with any discipline procedures, please schedule a meeting with your child's guide. The Head of School and other Administrators will be present at this meeting as well to discuss your concerns and come to consensus on a discipline plan.

# Health and Safety

Please review the school's **COVID-19 Health and Wellness Plan** for the 2021-2022 School Year regarding our plans for managing the current COVID-19 outbreak.

## Illness and Communicable Disease

To maintain a healthy environment for all students and staff, please do not send your child to school if they are not feeling well. To be in attendance, your child needs to be well enough to participate in all activities (including outdoor recess). If a child becomes ill at school, we will notify parents so that the ill child can be picked up. Please keep your contact information up to date. If we cannot reach parents, we will contact the child's emergency contacts.

Use the following guidelines for keeping your child home. Should any of these symptoms be present children should remain home until they have been symptom free without medication for 24 hours.

1. Fever of at least 100°F under arm (axillary) and who also have one or more of the following:
  - Diarrhea or vomiting
  - Earache
  - Headache
  - Signs of irritability or confusion
  - Sore throat
  - Rash
  - Fatigue that limits participation in daily activities
2. Vomiting on 2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
3. Diarrhea: 3 or more watery stools within a 24-hour period or any bloody stool.
4. Rash, especially with fever or itching.
5. Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pinkeye) until clear or until 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
6. Sick appearance, not feeling well and/or not able to keep up with program activities.
7. Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered and 24 hours has passed since starting antibiotic treatment if treatment is necessary.
8. Lice or scabies. For head lice, children and staff may return to school or childcare after treatment and no live lice are present. For scabies, return after treatment.

Children with the above signs and symptoms will be separated from the group and cared for in the office. Parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified to pick up child. Staff members will follow the same exclusion criteria as children.

Sagebrush Montessori will ask that students stay home when they are ill with a communicable disease. The child may return when they are no longer contagious or have written permission from their physician. Please report all communicable diseases to the school so that we can in turn notify parents that a communicable disease has been present in their child's classroom.

## Immunizations

Sagebrush Montessori School follows the immunization guidelines established by the Benton-Franklin County Health District and the Washington State Department of Health. According to Washington's RCW 28A.210.080-

90, before or on the first day of every child's attendance at any public and private school or licensed child care center in Washington State, the parent or guardian must present proof of either: (1) full immunization, (2) the initiation and compliance with a schedule of immunizations required by rules of the State Board of Health, or (3) a certificate of exemption, signed by a parent or guardian and a licensed health care provider.

The State of Washington requires the following immunizations for students:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP/DT/Td/Tdap)
- Polio (IPV or OPV)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Hepatitis B
- Hemophilus Influenza Type B (HIB)

Please contact your child's licensed health care provider for additional information regarding immunizations against communicable diseases.

## Medications

If your child must receive prescribed or over-the-counter medications while at school, Washington State Law requires that the following conditions must be met:

1. The parent must submit an Oral or Injectable Medication Request Form signed by the parent **and** a licensed medical practitioner, such as a physician or dentist.
2. The medication must be brought to the school office by the parent or legal guardian in the original container. The container must be labeled with the child's name, physician's name, medication name, and dosage.
3. Long term requests shall be valid not more than the current school year.
4. All medications will be stored in a locked container and administered only by the appropriately trained staff member.
5. After the end of the school year, parents must pick up all medications or they will be disposed of by the end of June.

**To comply with State Law, please do not send medication of any kind to school with your child. If your child brings medication to the school, staff will not be able to administer the medication. You, the parent/guardian must bring in the medication and the Signed Oral or Injectable Medication Request Form. Additionally, parents/guardians are always welcome to come to school to administer their child's medication.**

## Life Threatening Conditions

Washington State Law (SHB 2834 6/2002) requires that children with life-threatening medical conditions have a medication treatment order, as well as nursing care plan on file at the school. Life-threatening means a condition that could put your child in danger of death during the school day. This can include severe food allergies, allergies to bee stings, diabetes, or other potentially life-threatening conditions. Students diagnosed with life-threatening conditions will not be allowed to attend school until completed forms and necessary supplies have been received and reviewed by the school.

If your child has a health concern that the school needs to be made aware of, please advise us so that we can take every step possible to ensure your child's safety.

If your child has food sensitivities, such as food allergies or intolerances, it is your responsibility to communicate that with the school and guide, and to provide alternative snacks and treats for your child. This may include food or treats for snacks, holiday celebrations, birthday celebrations, etc.

## Emergencies

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, Sagebrush Montessori will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child. The child's individual emergency instructions (on file in the office) are consulted and parents called immediately. If necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance to Kadlec Regional Medical Center or other medical facility as determined by emergency personnel. A staff member and the child's school file containing consent for medical treatment, medical insurance information and physician name/number will accompany the child. Please keep emergency contact information up to date in your child's file.

## Lice

Students diagnosed with live head lice will need to be treated after returning home and may return to class after treatment has been successful (no live lice). Prevention works best when long hair is braided or put in a ponytail, children should not share hair brushes or accessories, coats, or hats. Coats should be kept separated (in a backpack if cubbies are not possible) and should never be put in a pile. Please see the following link for details on getting rid of head lice: <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html>

## Weapons Free Zone, Tobacco Use Policy

Sagebrush Montessori has a no weapons policy. Washington State law forbids weapons on school property. No firearms, weapons, dangerous items, or items that may be construed as weapons may be brought onto the campus or within the building. This policy is strictly enforced for the safety of our students.

We prohibit the use of all tobacco products on school property.

## Locked Door Policy

In order to protect students from potential intruders, outside doors are locked on the outside (but able to open freely from the inside in case of emergencies). Parents and guardians should ring the bell or knock if needing to enter the building during school hours.

## Hand Washing

Hand washing is an effective tool for reducing the spread of diseases and pathogens. Students will wash hands upon arrival at school, after using the restroom, before and after eating, after recess, and before dismissal. We expect adults to wash hands prior to and after working in the classroom.

## Fieldtrip Policy

From time-to-time children will have opportunities to go on school sponsored field trips with the classroom. Field trips are scheduled in advance and are announced via email and/or Transparent Classroom. All participating children must have a signed Field Trip Authorization form prior to the trip. Parents are sometimes asked to help drive for and/or chaperone the outings.

Parents who are volunteering to drive must have a completed background check on file. We also run DOL driver checks on any person who will be transporting children. Additionally, when volunteering to drive, you will be notified of insurance and safety requirements. Your insurance must meet the following requirements: minimum

liability limits of \$100,000 bodily injury per person, \$300,000 bodily injury per accident, and \$100,000 physical damage. Sagebrush must have a copy of your license and insurance card before you depart. Sagebrush Montessori does have secondary coverage for all drivers, but the information above is required as primary insurance.

When transporting children in your vehicle, it is also important that current state requirements for child safety seats are met. Children must be in an appropriately fitting child safety seat until they are 4' 9" tall, and the seat belt must fit the child correctly across the chest and hips (not just a lap belt). Children under 13 years old are not allowed to sit in the front seat. Talking or messaging on mobile devices while transporting children is expressly forbidden. Any incident of using a mobile device while transporting children will result in permanent removal from the chaperone list. Drivers are required to pull to the side of the road to use any mobile device. We are grateful for your support of this policy.

## **Neighborhood Walks**

Occasionally, groups will take a supervised walk in our neighborhood. In this case, a list of the children going, and a walk route is posted at the school. The lead guide and assistant will accompany the students. Children will return to the building for normal pick-up time. Mobile phones are always used in the playground, on walks, and on field trips. Parents/guardians must complete a Neighborhood Walk Permission Form for their student(s) to participate.

## **Communication Between School and Family**

### **Appointments**

Appointments are highly encouraged if there is a significant or private issue (relating to home and family life, school performance, medical concerns etc.) so you are sure to have the time and attention that is needed. Appointments are also great for reviewing your child's most current work and lesson schedule.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Conferences are scheduled with all parents in both the fall and spring. Conference days are noted on the school calendar. There is no school or childcare on conference days. In addition to these scheduled times, parents or teachers may call for conferences as the need arises.

### **Class News and Take-Home Folders**

Sagebrush Montessori sends regular newsletters via email to inform parents of upcoming events, current topics of study, child development information and other pertinent information. Please be sure that all teacher and administrator email addresses are on your safe senders list so no emails are missed.

The children's work on paper will be sent home periodically to allow parents to follow up on their studies and interests. Please check the folder when it comes home and return the empty folder to school the following school day. Take the time to talk about your child's work with them – they have worked very hard and will enjoy sharing it with you.

### **Email and Transparent Classroom**

Your child's guide and the school office will email you regularly regarding upcoming events, newsletters, etc. Please be sure that your most currently used email address is on file in the office. You can email your child's guide directly for basic questions regarding the classroom, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, etc. If you

would like to discuss deeper issues such as your child's work, friendships and development, please schedule an appointment with your child's guide as these topics are generally much easier to discuss in person.

Conference reports and photos of your child at work may also be shared with you throughout the year using Transparent Classroom (<https://www.transparentclassroom.com>). More information about Transparent Classroom will be sent out at the start of the school year.

Additional communication from the administration will go out on a regular basis about upcoming events, paperwork, volunteer opportunities, etc. Please be sure to update us whenever changes to your email address occur.

## Phone Calls and Messages

The Children's House campus can be reached by phone at (509) 946 – 0778.

The Elementary campus can be reached by phone at (509) 713 – 7322.

If we are unable to answer the phone, please leave a message. We will get back to you. Teaching staff is generally unable to answer calls during the school day as they are with the children. Please leave a message and your child's guide can get back to you either before or after school.

All communication regarding absences, tardies, and pickups should go through [attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org](mailto:attendance@sagebrushmontessori.org)

## Events and Documents

Upcoming events and important documents can be found on:

- The school website: [www.sagebrushmontessori.org](http://www.sagebrushmontessori.org)
- The school Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/sagebrushmontessori](http://www.facebook.com/sagebrushmontessori)
- Transparent Classroom: <https://www.transparentclassroom.com/>
- You can subscribe to our Outlook calendar feed by clicking [here](#)

## Parent/Guardian Involvement

### Cell Phone Use

It is our hope that communal areas of the school be cell phone free areas. Being fully present with your child and communicating with other parents while at school is a priority at Sagebrush Montessori. Set aside mobile devices until outside of the building.

### Code of Conduct

Families with a child enrolled at Sagebrush Montessori become an integral part of our school community. When joined by a common set of beliefs and purposes, the school and parents become a powerful team with far reaching positive effects on children and the community. To be successful, the school relies upon and expects cooperation of its parents, who must embrace the school mission, share in its core values, and support its curriculum, faculty and staff. Enrollment of your child indicates a willingness to abide by the following guidelines:

- **Communication** – Parents support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to a staff member closest to the issue. Use of mass emails or conversations at

a casual social event with parents about sensitive issues involving policy, staff or students is inappropriate and counterproductive.

- **Conflicts:** Conflicts are addressed in a calm and private manner, preferably in person or with a respectful note. Anger, frustration, or criticism are expressed in person, not by phone or email. Meetings are held by appointment at a mutually convenient time.
- **Etiquette:** Sagebrush Montessori staff and parents are expected to strive for high standards of etiquette and behavior. Commitments are honored, criticism is constructive, and good behavior is modeled by all.
- **Privacy:** Help us maintain mutual trust and respect by safeguarding the privacy of children, parents and staff. Passing on damaging or hurtful information is not acceptable. Keep contact information confidential. Use contact information for school business only.

## Grievance/Complaint Procedure

Where conflicts cannot be resolved successfully by the parties involved, a grievance or complaint procedure is established to help ensure that all conflicts are recognized and resolved in a timely manner and ensuring that grace, courtesy, and respect are paid to all involved. To see or receive a copy of this policy, please ask the school office.

## Observations and Access

For the 2021 – 2022 School Year there will be very limited access to the Classrooms, Club Room areas, or toilet facilities at Sagebrush Montessori for anyone other than current children and staff.

If it becomes possible to offer classroom observation times later in the school year, we will contact families directly with instructions on how to participate.

## Divorced/Separated Parents

As advocates for children, we must remain neutral during family disputes that may arise. Therefore, we follow these guidelines:

- Children will be released to either parent of record unless we have a custody order or restraining order on file that would prohibit the child's release to a parent.
- Records and information not normally provided to families will only be released with a court order. This includes, but is not limited to, sign-in sheets, names, addresses, and phone numbers.
- Both parents are asked to attend the same parent-teacher conference rather than separate conferences. This helps eliminate gaps and keeps both parents engaged in the teamwork of the child's education. The only exception to this is when one parent has a restraining order against the other.
- We endeavor to communicate with each parent equally. Each parent will have a file within the child's take-home folder and the school will provide a copy of all paperwork for each parent. The exception will be if a parent requests, in writing, to not have a duplicate. Emails or other written communication about the child will be sent to both parents.
- If the relationship between parents is acrimonious or issues of difficult communication arise between parents, it is the responsibility of the parents to seek out appropriate mediation and support and to avoid involving the school administration or staff in any triangulation. As advocates for the child, we know first-hand that the best support for every child's school experience is a home environment (s) defined by support, respect, and positive behavior modeling.

## Fundraising

Each year, Sagebrush Montessori will launch several fundraising campaigns to help raise money for the school. Fundraising is an opportunity for our community to align with our mission as well as a source for continuous improvements to our campuses, development for our staff, and classroom materials for students. We are proud to offer tuition that is comparable to or lower than tuitions at other independent schools. If you would like to help with school fundraising, please contact the administrative staff, who can help put you in touch with others who are working on current and upcoming fundraising projects.

All philanthropic support is essential to the education of our students; therefore, we ask each family to commit to participating in at least one fundraising campaign each year that they have a child enrolled at the school.

An Annual Report celebrating our accomplishments and detailing the school's financial life will be published each year to be available for review.

## Volunteering

Child development research shows that when parents are actively involved in their child's education, participating in the learning opportunities at school and maintaining an active role in the learning environment, children consistently achieve higher levels of academic performance. Studies show that this outcome is consistent across demographics and other background characteristics.

As part of each child's enrollment at Sagebrush Montessori, parents are expected to volunteer one hour per month when their child is participating in in-person learning. Additional hours are always beneficial to your child and are greatly appreciated by the Sagebrush staff and students. Hours need not be completed monthly but should be completed in full by the last day of school. Families who do not wish to give service hours agree to pay \$15/hour for up to 10 hours of service. We will discuss methods for tracking volunteer hours at Back-to-School night in September.

Our parents are a valuable resource, and we would like for you to share your talents with us. If you have a special skill, a special knowledge about a particular subject, have visited a foreign country, have a unique collection, or just want to help in the classroom, please let us know. We appreciate any additional time you can spare for volunteering, helping with laundry, driving on field trips, or assisting in various classroom activities.

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, all volunteers must submit a background check through Washington State Patrol and be approved before volunteering during operating hours.

1. **At the start of the school year, each family will receive a volunteer handbook and an application for a background check.**
2. **Read the Volunteer Handbook thoroughly.** When you sign the application for a background check, you are agreeing to the policies and procedures outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.
3. **Complete application for a background check** (please remember to attach a copy of your driver's license or another legal photo ID.) Immunization status may be requested.
4. **Submit your application.**

**Approval process:** Sagebrush Montessori is required by law to perform background checks on all volunteer applicants through Washington State Patrol. The approval process can take up to two weeks from the time you submitted your application. Once you are approved, your name is added to the approved volunteers list.

**When to reapply:** Volunteer approval is valid for two years. After two years, you must reapply. You will receive notification that it's time to reapply when you are approaching your volunteer approval expiration.

## Staff Appreciation

As holidays or special occasions arise, many of us consider the people in our lives for whom we would like to show appreciation. If you and your child would like to present a gift to a staff member, keep them as modest as they are heartfelt. We would like to model for the children that the expression of appreciation does not require a sum of money. Your family may consider something that would benefit the classroom or school as a whole.

Group gifts may be organized by the school when there is a major event in a staff person's life.

If a child brings a gift for the classroom, it will be opened in class. If a gift is for an individual staff person, it will be opened in private.

Another form of appreciation is through food. Parents organize to bring potluck food for staff on in-service and conference days and for a lunch during teacher appreciation week. Sign-ups for this kind of appreciation will take place during Back-to-School night.

## Re-enrollment Policies and Procedures

*For New Student Enrollment Policies, please see the school website or contact the school office.*

Our goal is to help all children meet their developmental potential. Our staff and environments accommodate and support a wide range of personalities and learning styles. We are committed to providing a high-quality Montessori education to as many families as possible.

When difficulties in a child's development or behavior at school arise, we will engage in a process for assessment and support. It is the work of the child's guide and our administration to determine if our environment can adequately meet the needs of the child. The guide and administration may consider the needs of the whole group, as well as the individual, when making this assessment. Parents must be committed to engaging with tools and services that are suggested and should support the efforts and judgements of the staff working with the child.

When conflicts arise from a parent not adhering to the Parent Code of Conduct (see section), the administration will meet with the parent to determine if enrollment can continue.

## Continued Enrollment Forms

Families continuing to the next year will be given re-enrollment paperwork in February. All paperwork must be returned by the date listed on the paperwork (usually the mid-February). Spots cannot be guaranteed for those who do not submit re-enrollment forms in a timely manner.

Each August, you will be provided with registration paperwork (questionnaire, emergency information, authorizations, record of immunization, etc.) which must be returned to the office before your child begins school. Washington childcare laws require that emergency information and immunizations certificates be kept current.

## Final Year Commitment

The Children's House is designed to meet the needs of children ages 3 to 6. A good age mix is required for appropriate dynamics to take place, i.e. the classroom activities are more expansive, the social interaction more satisfactory, and the energy level more conducive to child comfort. Sagebrush Montessori feels a responsibility to offer all families a fully developed Montessori program. Sagebrush Montessori asks that all children who begin in our program commit to stay through the completion of their "kindergarten" year. It is our expectation that five-year olds who have not turned six before August 31 will likely need to stay for another year before being developmentally ready to attend elementary.

The re-enrollment contract, due each year in February, will reflect this commitment. If you are unable to make this commitment, we feel it necessary to give priority to incoming families who are planning to stay until their child is ready for first grade. Therefore, we ask families to choose another program if a final year commitment cannot be made.

## Sibling Enrollment Policy

Enrollment priority is given to siblings so that the families may be in one school community. However, Sagebrush Montessori will not honor the sibling priority policy if/when a family removes an older child prior to the completion of a three-year cycle of a given age group. At each level, our classrooms are at their best when there is a balanced mixed age group. Early withdrawal disrupts the child's opportunity to complete a three-year cycle and the classroom's need for the leadership of the oldest children.

Additionally, we require siblings, like other new children, to accept a space no more than two weeks after the available space is offered.

## Enrollment in the Elementary Program

Priority in our elementary (EL) program is given for graduating CH families. Due to the limited number of spaces available each year, kindergarten families will be asked to submit a form of interest in attending the elementary program no later than fall conferences. Parents will be asked to tour and observe at the elementary campus and submit waitlist paperwork by mid-February.

## Notification of Admission Status

You will be notified by mail of your child's admissions status by the end of February.

**Registration:** If admitted, you will be sent registration materials (an enrollment contract and participation agreement). Please return both forms within two weeks with the tuition deposit and the registration fee to reserve your child's space. Registered students will have a visit to the classroom in May to help them become familiar and comfortable with the school. The Head of School will contact families directly to schedule the visitation. An open house and information evening will be held for incoming families.

**Wait List Option:** If we are unable to offer an admissions slot at this time, you may choose to remain on the wait list in case of future openings. It is usually the case that there will be some turn over between Spring and the beginning of school in September. If you remain on the wait list, you will be contacted as soon as such an opening occurs.

# Payment and Billing information

## Tuition and Fees

As an independent school, Sagebrush Montessori relies exclusively on tuition and private contributions. We strive to provide high-quality, traditional Montessori education at tuition rates that provide rewarding wages for our highly qualified staff while also trying to keep tuition at reasonable rates for families.

Tuition for the 2021 - 2022 school year is as follows:

- Morning only students: \$3650/year
- Full Day students: \$5900/year

Tuition is billed on an annual basis. You may choose to make 10 monthly payments, 12 monthly payments, or pay the full amount at the start of the school year. A ledger account is established for each family. The monthly balance is payable on or before the 5th of the month. A late fee of \$25 will be assessed if payment is not received by the 6th of each month. No balance may be carried through the summer months. One statement is given per family per month. Any division of charges is the responsibility of the parents and/or legal guardians.

The following fees are also indicated on the registration contract and are listed here for your reference.

- **Application Fee: \$25** This fee accompanies the wait list application and is non-refundable.
- **Registration Fee: \$150** This fee accompanies the registration form and is non-refundable unless we are unable to offer your child a space.
- **Tuition Installment: \$365/\$590** This is kept for your child's last month of the school year, June. This amount can only be refunded during the school year if a one month (30 days) written notice of withdrawal is given.
- **Supply Fee: \$125 (half day CH)/\$150(Full day CH)/\$225 (EL)** This is for the use of materials during the school year for each child enrolled. This fee covers classroom materials, such as books, science equipment, manipulatives, and art supplies. It is due on or before September 1 and is non-refundable.
- **Elementary Camp Fee: \$200** This fee covers tuition, transportation and supplies for the annual spring camping trip. It is due November 1 (This will not be required if the annual camping trip will be postponed for the 2021 – 2022 school year).

Sagebrush Montessori will not refund tuition fees for withdrawals from the program. We will refund the Tuition Installment of \$365/\$590 for the last month's tuition if one-month (30 days) notice is given.

## Sibling Discounts

To encourage continued enrollment for families with multiple children, a sibling discount is offered as follows. The discount will be applied to the tuition of the child or children youngest to oldest.

When a family has more than one child enrolled at Sagebrush Montessori the following sibling discount is offered:

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| • First enrolled child (oldest)           | Full tuition         |
| • Second enrolled child (next oldest)     | 10% off full tuition |
| • Third enrolled child (next oldest)      | 20% off full tuition |
| • Fourth and subsequent enrolled children | 30% off full tuition |

Once a child leaves Sagebrush Montessori the discount will be recalculated based on the remaining enrolled children.

## **Payment Options**

For the month of September 2021, all payments and fees must be paid via check. Starting October 2021, Sagebrush will begin partnering with FACTS, an online tuition management tool. More information about access, creating an account, and selecting a payment plan will be shared in September. From October 2021 on, all payments must be made through FACTS.

## **Returned Check Policy**

In the event that a check made out to Sagebrush Montessori is returned for insufficient funds, our bank will charge Sagebrush Montessori up to \$60.00 in returned check fees. This is in addition to any charges to the owner of the account the check was written from. We understand that there are several reasons this could occur. The first time this happens we will contact the owner of the check to notify them that their check has been returned but we will not pass the fee on to the check owner. If a second check is returned for insufficient funds, we will charge your student account with the corresponding fees for that check as well as the original returned check. Should the problem occur a third time, the fees will be added to your student account and an administrator and/or board member will meet with you within two weeks to revise the financial agreement between you and Sagebrush Montessori.

If families are experiencing financial hardship, we encourage them to proactively set up a meeting with a school administrator and/or the appropriate board member to discuss a plan to address their financial need.

## **Weather Emergencies and School Closures/Delays**

### **Inclement Weather / Snow Days**

We will follow the lead of the Richland School District for determining delays to school starting or school closures due to inclement weather. Information on school closures or delays is available on the Richland School District website, [www.rsd.edu](http://www.rsd.edu), on local radio and TV stations, such as KNDU, and via the Facebook feed, Transparent Classroom, and email.

If school is delayed two hours or less, no make-up day will be needed. If school is closed for a full day, a snow make-up day is required. Snow make-up days are listed on the calendar.

### **Emergencies**

We have specific plans for other emergencies that may take place during the school day. Please make sure you have your child's emergency information up to date in the event that we need to contact you during an emergency.

# COVID-19 Health and Wellness Policies

The goal of Sagebrush Montessori is to open our schools normally unless otherwise prohibited by the state. The Washington Department of Health (DOH) has updated requirements for all public and private schools. Those requirements can be found at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-105-K12Schools2021-2022.pdf>

In this section of the handbook, we explain the policies and procedures we are employing to mitigate COVID-19 related risks at school. It has been compiled using the COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations for schools and childcare programs published by the CDC, State of Washington, and the Benton-Franklin Health District.

Vaccination is considered the strongest protective measure against COVID-19, and we encourage all those 12 and older in our community to get vaccinated. Nearly all our student body remains ineligible for vaccination at this time. Until vaccines are made available to those under 12, we will practice a “layered” prevention strategy.

The highlights of our COVID-19 Health and Wellness plans are:

- Masking as a highly effective tool to prevent COVID-19 transmission
- Daily health screening for students and staff
- Physical distancing
- Healthy hand hygiene
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Ventilation

Sagebrush operating procedures meet or exceed the minimum standards of care and will be updated as new information or additional guidelines are made available. Our focus is on prevention of transmission and maintaining a functioning educational program for our students.

This document is a working document and will continue to be updated on a regular basis.

## Face Mask Requirements

Face masks are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. We have decided to be very conservative with our face mask policy so as to reduce transmission and to keep the school open as much as possible.

All community members are encouraged to wear face coverings outside of the school environment. Please start now in getting your children accustomed to wearing their masks. Remember, consistently wearing masks increases the likelihood of the school being open and your children being at school every day!

### ***Staff***

Staff will be required, at a minimum, to wear a three-layer, non-surgical paper mask when working with children. In the classroom, a clear face shield with drape may be worn during presentations that require clear articulation and visibility of mouth such as language exercises and presentations for limited periods of time.

### ***Children***

All children will be asked to wear, at a minimum, a cloth face mask during school hours both indoors and out. If community transmission rates decrease to “moderate” or “low” transmission levels, face coverings will not be required outdoors.

**Parents and guests**

Parents and guests are required to wear a mask during drop-off and pick-up (including elementary car line), when on-campus, and at all school sponsored events.

**Temperature and Symptom guidelines**

A person with a temperature over 100.0°F at any time in the previous 24 hours will be denied entry to the school or will be sent home following our Required Absence Policy.

If medication was used to lower an individual’s temperature, they will be denied entry based on the fact they did have a fever. If the fever develops at school, the protocols for COVID-19 Symptoms at School will be followed.

A child or staff member with any of the following symptoms (if the symptom is of greater intensity or frequency than what is normally experienced) will be denied entry to the school or sent home following Symptoms at School protocols:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Congestion
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

Symptoms are broken into two categories – Class A and Class B:

CLASS A SYMPTOMS	CLASS B SYMPTOMS
Temperature >100.4	Fatigue
Cough	Congestion or runny nose
Loss of taste or smell	Muscle and body aches
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Headache
	Sore throat
	Nausea or vomiting
	Diarrhea

These criteria are subject to change based on new guidelines or information.

A staff member or child with self-identified symptoms will contact the administration, not come to school, and follow the procedures outlined in the [Return to School Guidance](#).

## Screening Procedures

Daily temperature and symptom screening for all students, staff, and all their household members is required. Screening should take place each morning before leaving for school and again upon arrival. Screening results will be reported through Transparent Classroom.

## Required Absence Policy

Sagebrush has decided to be conservative about child and staff absences as an important tool for helping reduce the transmission of COVID-19 at school. Our goal is to maintain a safe school environment for our children and staff so that our school can remain open with as few COVID-19 related closures as possible. We believe it is better to have the school open and safe with some children not able to attend for short periods of time than it is to trigger any school-wide closures due to possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our community.

- Students, staff, family members, extended family members, and caregivers will monitor and report temperatures and symptoms.
- In the event of cold/flu-like symptoms or illness in a child, staff, or family member, extended family member, or caregiver at any time during the school year, staff and children will be required to stay home following [Return to School Guidance](#) established by Benton-Franklin Health District.

You can use the flow chart on the last page of this booklet to determine when your child is able to return to school.

## Protocols for Cleaning and Disinfecting

Sagebrush Montessori School follows the national standards for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection of educational facilities for children provided by [Caring for Our Children \(CFOC\)](#)

Each classroom community has a detailed cleaning and disinfecting plan, including frequency of cleaning, cleaning protocols for specific materials, and staff responsibilities.

Throughout the day staff will disinfect common surfaces a minimum of three times. A janitorial service with professional cleaning equipment will service the building, including disinfection of common surfaces, routinely. Cleaning logs will be made available for parents to review.

Staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. Staff will follow [CDC's guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting](#)

## Physical Distancing Strategies

Sagebrush Montessori School thankfully has adequate space available to each of our classrooms to allow for adequate distancing between children and adults. We do not expect that young children will distance themselves from other children or adults while at school. Young children learn by engaging with their environment, which includes the other people in it. However, we will employ the following strategies for limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our communities:

- Gentle encouragement to maintain distance.
- The physical distance between children will be increased in daily work locations, group gatherings, meals, and snacks.
- When eating indoors, we will modify our schedule and spacing to increase distance between children to at least six feet.
- At nap time, children's naptime mats will be spaced out as much as possible, with alternating head to toe arrangements to increase the distance between children.

## Healthy Hand Hygiene

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of infections from one person to the next. All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the classroom and after breaks
- Before and after eating or handling food
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors or in sand
- After handling garbage
- Before and after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way (<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>)

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Use your forearm or elbow to turn off the tap and dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their own hands.

### Use of Hand Sanitizer

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. How to use hand sanitizer:

1. Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand.
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

## Ventilation

To ensure good ventilation and good indoor air quality, staff will offer more outside time, open windows often, and ensure HVAC systems are working at their greatest efficiency. Each classroom is also equipped with an air purifier.

## Community Events & Gatherings

The following in-person events will be suspended until further notice:

- Large community events (i.e., Winter Celebration, Special Friends Day, etc.)
- Onsite parent teacher conferences and parent education (will be held remotely)
- Parent observations of the classroom
- Field Trips

Parent events will occur via Teams or Zoom until further notice.

## Communication

Sagebrush Montessori will communicate through email in the following situations:

- With families, if their child has been in close contact with someone at school who has then tested positive for COVID-19.
- With staff, if they have been in close contact with someone at school who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- With the entire school community regarding a temporary school closure following a positive COVID-19 exposure.

Who should stay home from work?

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should not go to work and stay home, including critical infrastructure essential workers. If someone starts having COVID-19 symptoms while they are at work, they should go home immediately.

How long should someone with COVID-19 symptoms stay home?

The amount of time someone should stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms can be different depending on:

- Which symptoms they have (class A or B)
- If a health care provider diagnosed them with something other than COVID-19 that explains all symptoms
- Results of the COVID-19 test

**See Table 1 below and the flow chart on the next page to decide how long sick individuals should stay home.**

**Table 1: Symptoms Consistent with COVID-19**

<b>Class A Symptoms</b>	<b>Class B Symptoms</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fever (subjective or greater than or equal to 100.4°F)</li><li>• Chills</li><li>• Cough</li><li>• Loss of sense of taste and/or smell</li><li>• Shortness of breath</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Headache</li><li>• Muscle or body aches</li><li>• Sore throat</li><li>• Congestion or runny nose</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Diarrhea (at least 2 loose stools in 24 hours)</li></ul>

