Undercroft
Montessori School • est. 1964



2026-2027
PARENT HANDBOOK

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

-**Dr. Maria Montessori**

Welcome to Undercroft Montessori School!

To both new and returning families, we extend a warm welcome to a new school year! We are so happy you are part of our Undercroft community. Over the course of this year your children will grow in a Montessori environment designed to cultivate qualities of independence, confidence, competence, leadership and a love of learning.

Parents are important teachers in the lives of their children and we are honored to partner with you in support of your child's learning and development. The strength of that partnership is an important foundation for your child's success in school. We are committed to our relationships with parents and rely on your communication, support, and involvement to ensure a successful experience for your child.

As we look forward to a new school year, we are eager to share the many wonderful things Undercroft has to offer.

Please review carefully the information included in this handbook. It is intended to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of the school. And please reach out and ask if you have questions – we're here to assist and support you through all your years at Undercroft.

We are delighted you have chosen our school for your child and look forward to working together to provide a rich opportunity for your child's growth and development.

Warm regards,



Nancy Davis
Head of School

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Mission Statement

Undercroft was founded in 1964 by parents who wanted to bring Montessori education to Tulsa. Undercroft is the first and only accredited Montessori school in Oklahoma.

Our Mission:

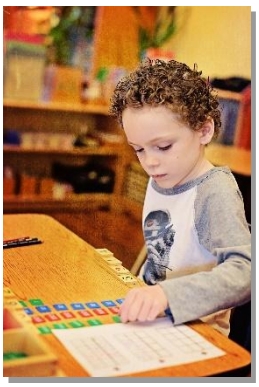
Undercroft Montessori School provides an authentic Montessori education. We are committed to academic excellence; independence in thought and action; critical and collaborative thinking and; compassion and respect for self, community and the world.

Our Philosophy:

The Montessori approach to education takes its name from Italian physician and educator, Dr. Maria Montessori. Developed over a century ago, her discoveries regarding how children develop and learn are supported by modern scientific research. Undercroft Montessori School is among thousands of Montessori schools around the world.

Dr. Montessori discovered:

- Students' education and development largely result from their own efforts
- Students possess a deep desire to explore their environment with all of their senses
- Students require freedom to move and choose their own activities
- Students have innate desire for purposeful work
- Students' environment plays a significant role in providing information and opportunities for exploration







Our Values:

Members of the Undercroft community value and are committed to:

- Nurture the spirit of the child
- Foster personal responsibility for learning and life choices
- Provide a prepared environment supporting individual students' developmental needs at each level
- Demonstrate community and global awareness, global citizenship and social responsibility
- Promote peace
- Celebrate and honor diversity
- Recognize and cultivate the whole child; physical, emotional, social and intellectual
- Respect our staff and fully trained guides; dedicated, compassionate and committed to ongoing professional development
- Build strong and active partnerships among students, parents and staff
- Thrive as a mutually respectful and supportive community

Nondiscrimination Policy

Undercroft Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national or ethnic origin, genetic information, disability, age, or any other class protected by law, in the administration of its policies, practices, or procedures, including admission of students, tuition assistance, and educational services.

Diversity

At Undercroft Montessori School, we embrace and celebrate human diversity as a fundamental value. Our school is strengthened by fully including individuals with diverse backgrounds, lived experiences, family histories, perspectives, identities, cultures, races, and religions. By fostering an environment where everyone feels valued, represented, and empowered, we will create a place where all can thrive.

School Hours

Arrival Carpool Time[1]:

Full Day Students, All Levels	7:55 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

Please try to arrive promptly by 7:55 a.m. to assure your child will arrive to school on time. Guides will leave carpool and return to their classrooms no later than 8:15 a.m.

Hours in Classrooms:

Half Day Early Childhood Students	7:55 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Full Day Students, All Levels	7:55 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Departure Carpool Times[2]:

Half Day Early Childhood Students	11:30 a.m. – 11:35 a.m.
Full Day Students, All Levels	3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Please try to arrive promptly for carpool within the time periods stated above. Morning early childhood students not picked up by 11:35 will be brought to the office to wait. Students not picked up by 3:30 will be brought to after care.

Before School Care Program	7:30 a.m. to 7:55 a.m.
After School Care Program	3:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
School Office Hours	7:55 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Messages and Phone Calls

Maintaining an uninterrupted classroom environment is essential to our students' focus. Please make all calls for teaching staff through our Main Office at **(918) 622-2890**. Administrative staff will deliver urgent messages right away, while non-urgent calls will go to voicemail to be returned after school or within 24 hours. ***We kindly ask that parents do not call or text guides on their personal cell phones during school hours.***

Voicemail is available on the main line when the office is closed or staff is temporarily unavailable. Parents can reach the Before & After School Care programs via the main office extension until 5:30 p.m. Our FAX number is **(918) 622-3203.**

After Hours Emergency Phone Calls

After hours emergency calls can be made to the Head of School's cell phone at 847-331-0767.

[1] Please see policies concerning tardiness in Section VIII.
[2] Please see policies concerning late pick up in Section VIII.



I. Undercroft Montessori School

History and Current Background of the School

Montessori education is based on principles established over a century ago by the Italian physician Dr. Maria Montessori. It found broad acceptance in the developed nations of the world and has been practiced in the United States for over 100 years. The Montessori approach is based on sound foundations in the behavioral and biological sciences. It is receiving increased recognition as a highly successful alternative to conventional educational methods. Montessorians have no common religious or political orientation. They are bound together only by their commitment to an educational philosophy based on natural human development that fosters a love of learning, self-reliance and self-respect.

Undercroft Montessori School was founded in 1964 as a nonprofit corporation by a group of Tulsa parents seeking the advantages of this unique approach for their own children. Today, there is every reason for optimism about the future of Undercroft and that of Montessori education in general.

Originally housed in the undercroft (basement) at Trinity Episcopal Church, Undercroft has expanded and improved. In 1967 the School purchased a building and land, establishing its home at its present location. In the fall of 1998 Undercroft elementary classes moved into a new building. In 2008, new construction replaced the 1967 "temporary" west building. With these expanded facilities, Undercroft quickly grew from its opening enrollment of 30 preschool children to its present enrollment of around 240 from age 3 through 8th grade.

Under the direction of the specially trained Montessori teaching staff, the students of Undercroft Montessori School are offered the full range of programs in practical life and sensorial development, language development, mathematics, geometry, science, geography, history, Spanish, music, creative arts, and physical fitness.

The Organization of the School

Undercroft Montessori School is a nonprofit corporation whose membership consists of the Directors of the corporation and all persons having a child presently enrolled in the school. The Board of Directors is the policy-making body of the school corporation. Board members are elected at the Annual Corporation Meeting each April to serve the school for a two-year term of office. Members of the board of directors may or may not be parents of students enrolled at the school.

See organization chart on page 5.

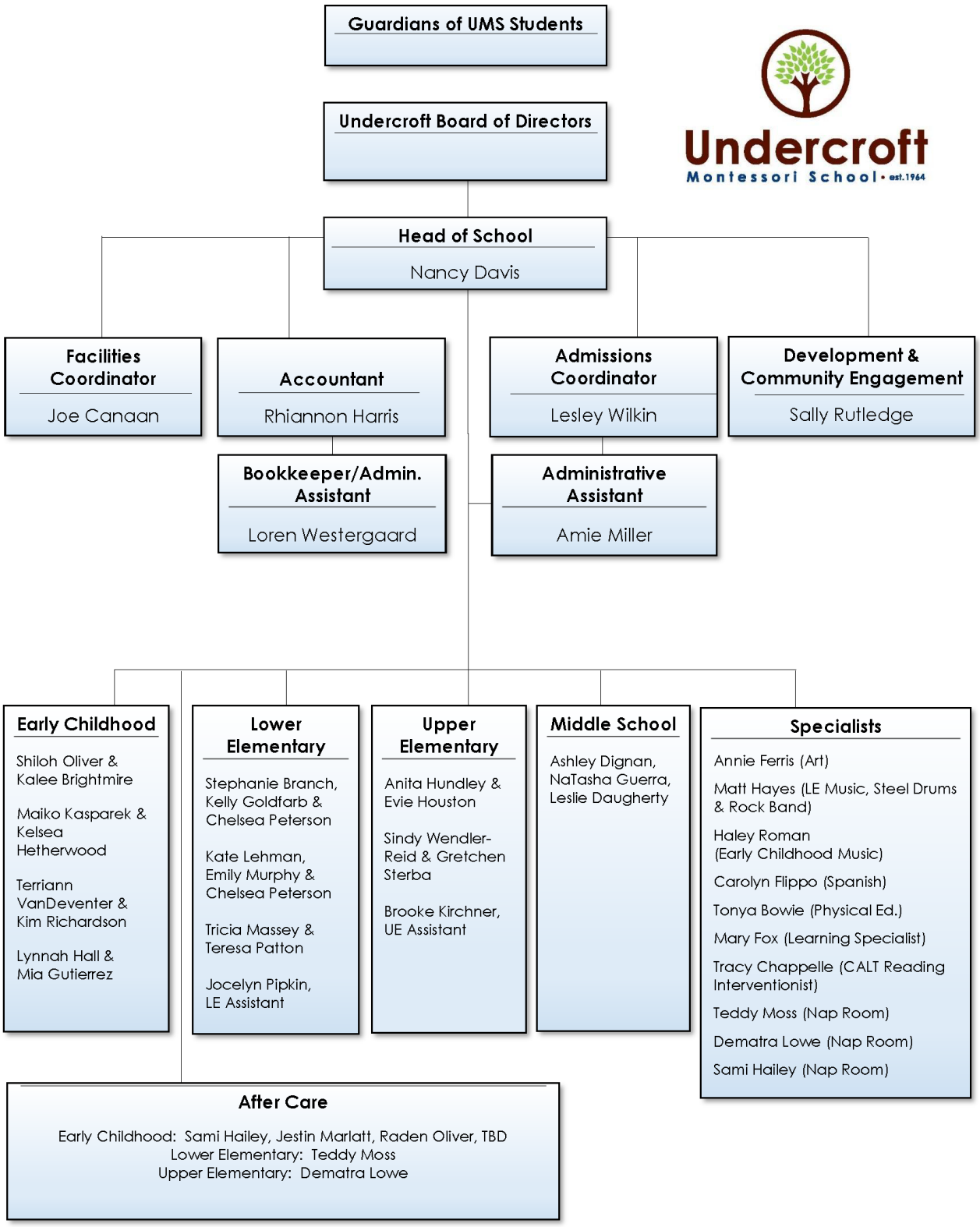
Accreditation

Undercroft Montessori School is accredited through the American Montessori Society [AMS]. This accreditation affirms our school meets a standard of excellence recognized by educators and Montessorians worldwide.

AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY
education that transforms lives
Accredited Member School



Organizational Chart



Functions of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors holds the ultimate responsibility for the governance, financial health, and long-term strategic direction of Undercroft Montessori School.

Core Functions of the Board

The primary responsibilities of the Board include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Stewardship:** Holding in trust the school's foundational history, its current daily provisions, and the future development of both campus programs and physical facilities.
- **Policy Making:** Formulating general operational policies in accordance with the school's Mission Statement.
- **Leadership Support:** Hiring, evaluating, and providing organizational support to the Head of School, who guides the Board and campus educationally, organizationally, and philosophically.
- **Resource Management:** Ensuring the necessary facilities, educational tools, and administrative equipment are provided for smooth school operations.
- **Financial Oversight:** Overseeing the sound financial management of the school, including the provision of a tuition assistance program.
- **Advancement & Outreach:** Leading fundraising efforts to support school growth and assisting with public relations to share Undercroft's unique educational character with the broader community.

Community Involvement & The CBC

Because Undercroft strives for a high level of achievement, we rely heavily on the collaborative efforts of our community volunteers. Parents and staff are highly encouraged to volunteer their services on various Board committees.

A primary avenue for this collaboration is the **Community Building Committee (CBC)**. Functioning similarly to a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), the CBC:

- Is led by a member (or members) of the Board of Directors.
- Includes the Head of School, staff members, classroom room representatives, and all Undercroft parents and friends.
- Is dedicated to fostering a deep sense of belonging, connection, and camaraderie among all Undercroft families through school-wide activities.

Board Meetings & Parent Participation

- **Schedule:** The Board of Directors typically meets monthly on the **second Tuesday** of the month. Meetings are open, and parents are always welcome to attend.
- **Attendance:** Non-voting attendees include staff representatives, the Head of School, and invited guests sharing specific expertise.
- **Addressing the Board:** If a parent wishes to formally address the Board, they must contact the Board Secretary in writing prior to the **first Monday** of the month.

Important Note: To ensure a fair and organized resolution process, the Board will not consider personal concerns or appeals unless they have first gone through the official **Concerns and Appeals Process** (detailed below).

Parent Concerns and Appeals

Any parent (or legal guardian) who has a concern about the school or classroom practices shall follow the procedures below:

Step 1. Contact the appropriate guide directly via e-mail to schedule a meeting with the guide. Provide in writing your concerns and discuss them with the guide at the scheduled meeting. The guide will respond in writing within one week.

Step 2. If the concerns persist or remain unresolved, contact the office to schedule a meeting with the Head of School. Provide in writing the concerns and discuss these concerns at the scheduled meeting. The Head of School will respond in writing within one week.

Step 3. If the matter is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, the parent may contact the President of the Board of Directors in writing. The Board will respond in writing to the parent within 30 days.

II. Admissions & Enrollment

Procedures

Admission to Undercroft Montessori School is open to children who are 3 through 14 years of age, depending on the individual child's development and readiness.

Application Process:

Step 1 Visit and observe the school's learning environments and study the school's information packet to familiarize themselves with the philosophy and nature of the school

Step 2 Submit the *Application for Admission* form online at www.undercroft.org along with a non-refundable application fee. Transferring students must provide Undercroft with records and recommendations from previous schools

Step 3 Schedule an introduction to the classroom environment through the office for your child with one of the Montessori guides (teachers)

Step 4 Applicants for our Elementary programs may also be scheduled for a shadow experience in the classroom

Admissions Criteria:

Acceptance and enrollment decisions are holistic and based on the following factors:



- **Developmental Readiness:** The child's apparent readiness for our independent environment.
- **Academic Records:** Documentation and teacher recommendations from previous schools.
- **Classroom Balance:** Available space within the learning environments, with careful consideration given to maintaining an optimal balance of ages and genders in each room.
- **Application Date:** The chronological order in which completed applications are received.
- **Montessori Background:** Prior Montessori experience.

Legacy and Sibling Placement:

Siblings of students currently or previously enrolled at Undercroft receive limited preference during the admissions process. However, sibling placement is not guaranteed, and siblings are not automatically placed in the same classroom or with the guide of an older brother or sister.

Program Commitment & The 3-Year Cycle

Our curriculum is progressive and built intentionally on successive, three-year developmental cycles. Because children who begin their Montessori education early in life (at age 3) receive the maximum benefit of this design, the placement of older children without prior Montessori background occurs less frequently.

- **Elementary & Middle School:** Prior Montessori experience is highly preferred for students entering our elementary or middle school programs.
- **Long-Term Commitment:** We strongly encourage families to commit to the entire Undercroft journey—from Early Childhood through Middle School—to truly reap the full academic, social, and emotional benefits of the complete Montessori curriculum.

Student Placement

The Head of School determines student placement within the learning environments at Undercroft. Students are placed in classrooms according to the best interests of the individual student and the class. A balance of ages, genders, learning characteristics and temperaments within each class is sought.

Parents with placement concerns should bring them directly to the attention of the Head of School. Although input is welcomed requests cannot be guaranteed. Contracts cannot be cancelled based on classroom placement or staffing decisions.

Veracross Privacy Policy

Undercroft uses Veracross, a Student Information System platform, to support a variety of school operations, including:

Managing student data
Learning management
Admissions & enrollment
Tuition management & billing

Veracross publishes a detailed product privacy policy, available at https://www.veracross.com/veracross-product-privacy-policy/, which includes a list of data that they store on Undercroft's behalf, how that data is collected, how that data is used, and who has access to that data. Additionally, Veracross has agreed to the Student Privacy Pledge, details of which can be reviewed here: https://studentprivacypledge.org/privacy-pledge-2-0/. Important components of this pledge include agreeing to only collect and use data that is necessary for school purposes, to never sell student information, and to never retain data beyond the time period required to support those school purposes.

We limit access to data in Veracross internally within Undercroft to only allow staff access to data that is necessary for their particular role.

If you have any questions or concerns about the privacy policy, you are encouraged to notify the Head of School. By accessing or using any part of the Platform, you agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the Veracross product privacy policy.

III. Financial Information

Tuition costs and fees are listed in the School Tuition Contract and posted on the website.

Supply Fee

The Supply Fee is due with the return of a signed contract. The supply fee is non-refundable. If the full year is not attended, the supply fee will be forfeited to the school.

Tuition Payments

Tuition payments for all payment plans (plan A, B & C) will be made via ACH Debit on the due date. Exceptions will be made for those wanting to pay by check or cash. The check must be received 7 days prior to the due date and an ACH Debit will not occur. When paying by check, please include the student's name(s) on the check in the memo section. **Our bank deposit scanner reads black and blue ink only; please write all checks in black or blue ink only.** All credit card payments will be subject to a convenience fee.

ACH Debits will be made on the 1st of each month. If the 1st falls on a holiday or weekend, the debit will be made on the next banking day. If the first installment of tuition is not received on or before August 1, 2026, the school retains the right to cancel the student's enrollment.

Late Fees

There will be a $35.00 late fee for late tuition payments. Past due balances will be subject to the late fee each month. A $35.00 fee will be assessed to any check or ACH payment returned due to insufficient funds. If multiple instances of insufficient funds occur, cash payment may be required for the remainder of the year. ***Please notify the Accountant as soon as possible if you are having difficulty making any payment***.

Delinquent Accounts

The student may be, at the sole discretion of the school, deemed to have withdrawn when an account is past due. If there have been late payment problems in the past, a 20-day contingency is added to the contract, which will result in immediate withdrawal. Under no circumstances, without prior payment arrangements, will the pupil be permitted to remain should the account become 60 days past due. At the discretion of the Accountant, Head of School, and/or Treasurer of the Board of Directors, any account more than 60 days past due may be turned over to a third party for collection. In the event the contract is not paid when due and is collected by a third party, the parents are responsible for any collection and court fees incurred. Additionally, the school reserves the right to withhold student records until tuition accounts are paid in full.

Student Withdrawal

Cancellation of a tuition contract for the upcoming (2026-2027) school year must have been made in writing prior to April 1, 2026. After April 1, 2026, the tuition contract is binding and tuition is due for the entire school year unless a request for withdrawal is granted by the Head of School.

Parental requests to withdraw a student from enrollment must be submitted in the form of a written notification to the Head of School. The unused balance of tuition paid or due will be refunded or forgiven *only* if enrollment remains at or above 238 after the student's actual removal. If the school removes a student because it believes the child is not suited to the school (this does not include

behavior or disciplinary issues which are disruptive to the school), parents may be relieved of any further obligation to pay future tuition or fees under the contract in the sole discretion of the school.

No enrollment contract may be voided due to class placement. Application fees and supply fees are nonrefundable. Furthermore, no refunds will be made for extended absences.

Tuition Assistance

Tuition Assistance in the form of tuition reduction is available on a limited basis to families who have been enrolled at Undercroft for at least one year and have a financial need. Applications are available in the business office, and must be submitted to the school, usually in December, each year for awards made the following year. A committee consisting of members of the Board of Directors, a representative from the business office, and the Head of School is responsible for awarding all tuition assistance. Decisions for tuition assistance for the 2026-2027 school year were made in January 2026.

Fundraising



As an independent, nonprofit educational corporation, Undercroft's primary source of revenue is tuition, which covers the majority of operating costs for the school, each year. However, tuition alone cannot fund major projects and initiatives that enhance the quality of our programs and facilities. For these, we rely on two major fundraising initiatives, each year: Annual Fund in the fall and fUNDERaiser in the spring.

Annual Fund augments tuition revenue to enable Undercroft to meet all the costs associated with operating a high-quality independent school. The Annual Fund helps moderate tuition increases to keep an Undercroft education within reach of more families. Revenue from the Annual Fund gives us the confidence to invest in the quality of our education beyond the basics, to enhance the classroom experience and to provide the engine for continuous, ongoing improvement.

Our community has the opportunity to support the Annual Fund each fall. The board of directors establishes a goal, with the hope that all members of the community will contribute. Having a high rate of participation by families, staff and board in the Annual Fund shows community solidarity and a continuing commitment to the strength and financial health of our school. All contributions, no matter the size, help to accomplish the goal of full community support of the Annual Fund campaign.

fUNDERaiser is a community celebration and fundraising event for parents and friends of Undercroft. Planned by our Board fUNDERaiser Committee, fUNDERaiser features a themed party (costumes optional), student art auction, silent auction, paddle raise, and more ways to give and get involved. Our community is invited to help solicit donations of services and items from favorite businesses and vendors, as well as connecting us with companies or individuals to sponsor the event. Funds raised are used to purchase classroom materials and furniture, technology, playscape upgrades, and security features, directly benefiting our students.

For questions about the Annual Fund or fUNDERaiser and how you can become involved, please contact our Development and Community Engagement Coordinator, Sally Rutledge, at sally.rutledge@undercroft.org.

Other Fundraising Activities:

- **Bake Sale is** hosted by the Community Building Committee on Folks' Day.
- **Book Fair** in the fall is hosted by our middle school students. Funds raised go to support the middle school and the student managed middle school business accounts.
- **Pizza Movie Nights** are hosted throughout the year to raise funds for individual classes or specific school-wide projects. Students love to spend an evening in their PJs at school with classmates, guides, games, and a movie. Parents love a night out, knowing their children are in good hands.
- **Peace, Love and Honey** is a middle school student managed business in partnership with a local honey farmer selling pure raw honey harvested from Tulsa's own honeybees. The middle school business program raises money for middle school adventure trips as part of their curriculum. Honey forms are available in the office or you may order online at http://undercroft.org/honey-store.
- **Spirit Events** are opportunities to support Undercroft through local businesses on particular days or evenings. Visit the specified restaurants or businesses on the scheduled date for a portion of sales are donated back to our school.

IV. Parent Information

Communication and Parent-School Partnerships

Strong, supportive parent-faculty relationships are fundamental to the Undercroft experience. Outside of regularly scheduled conference times, we encourage open dialogue between families, guides, and the administration.

If you would like to schedule an in-person or virtual meeting, please contact your child's guide directly to coordinate an appointment.

Professional Communication Boundaries

To protect the confidentiality of our students and maintain healthy boundaries for our faculty, we establish the following communication standards:

- **Email for Classroom Inquiries:** Outside of formal conferences, email is our primary tool for parent-teacher communication. It ensures confidentiality and keeps the entire classroom team informed. **When emailing about your child, please always copy the entire classroom guide team.**
- **Keep Informal Settings Casual:** We kindly ask that parents refrain from bringing up student progress or behavioral concerns during casual, busy moments such as carpool lines, school-wide events, or social gatherings. These moments do not allow guides the time, privacy, or focus your child deserves.

Communication Channels & Resources

We use a variety of platforms to keep you informed about school life, upcoming events, and the Montessori philosophy:

- Weekly Classroom Updates, sent via email by your child's guides
- Weekly Reminders, an administrative email sent every Friday afternoon from the main office

detailing school-wide events, reminders, and calendar deadlines

- Transparent Classroom, an online portal used to share real-time progress, photo updates and developmental milestones
- UNDERcurrents, our quarterly school newsletter highlighting community achievements and campus activities, distributed both digitally and via hard copy sent home with students
- Visit www.undercroft.org, for the master school calendar. Follow our official Facebook and Instagram pages for campus highlights

Physical Correspondence & Lending Library

- **Backpack Mail:** Occasionally, important physical notices, permission slips, or school messages are sent home directly in your child's backpack (or via U.S. mail for formal documentation). Please check your child's papers regularly. When in doubt about a deadline or event, don't hesitate to call the school office.
- **Parent & Professional Library:** Located in the main office, our school library houses an excellent collection of books, magazines, and articles focusing on the Montessori philosophy and modern educational research. Parents are welcome to browse and check out materials at any time.

Visitor Policy

Parents are welcome to visit the observation rooms in the west building without scheduling an appointment. Parents wishing to visit their child's class should schedule an appointment with their child's guide. Visits by parents or other guests to the campus or classrooms (other than their own child's classroom) require prior approval by the Head of School or a designated representative. Approval to visit one part of the campus does not imply approval to visit other parts of the campus. An authorized member of the school's staff will accompany persons touring the campus.



Visitors must check in at the school office, sign the visitor's log, and obtain a visitor's badge to wear. If no prior arrangement has been made, approval to visit may be granted by the Head of School or a designated representative at that time.

Custody

UMS cannot, by law, refuse a parent access to their child, or refuse to release a child to their parent, without a court order instructing UMS not to provide such access to, or release the child to, their parent. Please provide the office with a copy of a court order if you are instructing us not to release your child to their parent. It is the responsibility of the parents to keep the student's file current with the most recent court decrees. Action by the school is limited, by law, to instructions in the current court order UMS has on file.

Observations in a Classroom

Parent observations are encouraged. It is hoped parents and others interested in Undercroft Montessori School will find time spent observing the Montessori and specialists' classrooms both enjoyable and enlightening.

- Upon arriving for either a scheduled in-class observation or for an unscheduled observation through the observation window, visitors, including parents, must register in the visitor's log in

the office and pick up a "Visitor" identification badge.

- Guidelines apply to any observation setting, whether in Montessori or specials classes, or observing outside at "free play."
- Checked-in visitors are welcome to observe through the viewing window of any classroom at any time with no appointment necessary.
- A handout detailing observation instructions is available to all visitors.
- In-class parent observations may be scheduled from the first week of October through the second Friday in May by contacting the office or your child's guide. Make your appointment at least 48 hours in advance; only two adults may visit in a classroom at any given time.
- After signing in, in-class observers will be escorted to the classroom.
- After quietly entering, observers should take a seat in the adult chairs provided.
- Observers are invited to make written notes and record any questions they may have.

  In order that visitors may observe a normal classroom day, the following requests are respectfully made:

  - Try to avoid engaging students through eye contact or conversation.
  - If a student engages the visitor in conversation, be as brief as possible.
  - Of course, if their child shows a need, observing parents may talk with their own child and acknowledge the child's work.
  - For an optimal observation, one should avoid engaging one's own child in conversation just as one would with any other student.

  Observe the class as a whole.
  - Note the variety of activities.
  - Observe the social interaction among the students.
  - Are students working alone, or with other students?
  - How does the mood of the classroom vary from time to time?

  Focus on one or two students.
  - Is the student independent in choosing work and in using his/her work?
  - Does the student concentrate on one piece of work for a long time?
  - Is the student orderly in using the materials?
  - Note the cycle of work from beginning to end.

  Observe the guide and assistant.
  - When and in what way do they teach?
  - When do they act as a resource, as a link between student and materials?
  - How is order maintained in the classroom?

Although the guide or teacher may be unable to talk with the visitor or parent during class time, they will be happy to confer later at a mutually agreed upon time. A visit with the Head of School with questions is always welcomed.

Guide Conferences

Conferences with your child's guide are an important part of the total educational process. Please see the school calendar for conference dates. Please note these dates in your calendar and plan in advance your participation in your child's guide conference. It can be tempting for families to use these days to schedule vacations, asking guides to schedule alternate conference times. However, this results in lost planning time for the guides, or requires them to schedule conference times after their regular work hours; therefore, we ask families to make every effort to work within the schedule for regular conference times set in the calendar. In addition to these regularly scheduled conferences, parents are encouraged to call and

schedule informal conferences with their child's guide if needed.

Guide conferences are generally scheduled for a thirty-minute period. If additional time is needed, it can be requested at the time the appointment is made.

Field Trips

Field trips and in-school demonstrations are scheduled when appropriate for the students during the school year. At the early childhood level, field trips are infrequent because emphasis is placed on creating regularity, security and normalization in the classroom. As the student matures, field trip frequency increases with the elementary and middle school levels. The students develop initiative and independence while learning about life in their community.

Undercroft requires a field trip form to be signed by a parent or guardian before a student can accompany their class on a field trip.

The school will notify parents of the plans and details for each field trip in advance.



If we do not have a signed field trip form, the student will visit another classroom for the duration of the trip. If parents do not want their child to participate in a specific trip, arrangements must be made. The parents can either arrange for the student's care away from school or request that the guide make alternate arrangements on campus for the duration of the field trip.

Some field trips also provide an opportunity for additional involvement for parents wishing to volunteer as chaperones.

Motor Vehicle Record / Background Check

Undercroft Montessori School requires any volunteer who will have close, potentially unsupervised contact with a student to submit to and clear a background check. Volunteers who will be driving for field trips must submit to and clear both a background check *and* a Motor Vehicles Record search prior to transporting students to or from a school sponsored event.

Background and MVR search waiver forms are available in the office and must be completed at least one week before transporting children to a school sponsored event.

Personal Belongings / Lost and Found

Personal belongings such as toys and special treasures from home must not be brought to school, except as special items for "show and tell" (with the guide's consent).

Any unfamiliar items brought home from school by a child should be returned. They may be part of the school equipment or belong to another student.

Label all personal items with student's first and last name to increase the chances they will be returned to the proper owner.

Parents may check Lost and Found at any time. There are two locations for Lost and Found: in the west building, just inside the front entry vestibule, and in the east building inside the vestibule "Lost and Found" items not claimed are distributed to charitable organizations or others who can use them at the end of each semester.

Clothing and Attire

Our approach to student attire reflects our core Montessori values: creating an inclusive educational environment that is mutually respectful, celebrates diversity, and fosters personal responsibility.

While the primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parents or guardians, Undercroft's policies ensure that clothing aligns with our educational goals, protects student health and safety, and maintains a welcoming, non-intimidating atmosphere for everyone.



General Guidelines:

- **Practicality:** Clothing should be washable, durable, comfortable, and appropriate for the season.
- **Independence:** For our youngest students, clothing should promote independence. Please choose items with fastenings your child can open and close on their own.
- **Basic Coverage:** Students must wear a shirt, bottoms (pants, sweatpants, shorts, skirt, dress, etc.), and shoes. Clothing must cover private body parts and undergarments with opaque material. We highly recommend wearing shorts under dresses and skirts to allow for greater freedom of movement.
- **Footwear:** Students should wear well-fitted, closed-toe shoes with rubber soles that provide good traction on playground equipment, rocks, and gravel. Shoes with wheels (such as "Heelys") are not permitted. For Early Childhood students, light-up shoes are discouraged as they can distract from the classroom environment.

Expressive and Inclusive Attire:

Students are welcome to wear clothing that allows for personal expression, honors diverse cultures, and accommodates gender expression and body diversity.

- **Permitted Items:** Hats (including religious headwear), hooded sweatshirts, fitted pants, athletic attire, and clothing with commercial or athletic logos (provided they follow the safety/appropriateness rules below). Students are also welcome to choose their own hairstyles, hair coloring, and headgear.
- **Face Coverage:** Headgear that obscures the face is not permitted, except as part of a religious observance.
- **Valuables:** We strongly recommend leaving precious jewelry or easily damaged clothing at home.

Prohibited Content and Distractions:

- **Inappropriate Imagery:** Clothing may not depict violent language or images; profanity, pornography, hate speech, drugs, or alcohol; or any imagery/language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on a protected class.

- **Early Childhood Distractions:** We discourage Early Childhood students from wearing clothing with prominent media characters or designs, as these can distract from the focused learning environment.

Swimwear Guidelines:

For all water-based activities, swimwear must be made of opaque material and securely cover private areas during active movement and play.

- **Approved Options:** Functional one-piece suits, two-piece athletic suits (tankinis, rash guard sets), swim trunks or boardshorts, rash guards and surf shirts
- **Not Permitted**: Outfits that do not provide full coverage during active play (e.g., string bikinis or thong-style bottoms)

Outdoor Protection & Sunscreen

Hats and sunscreen are highly suggested for outdoor activities and field trips.

- **Application:** Please apply sunscreen at home before the school day begins.
- **Reapplication:** You may send a labeled bottle of sunscreen to the classroom for reapplication. A **Medication Form** must be completed first; these are available in the main office, on our website, or via email request.

Labeling Your Child's Gear

All clothing items that can be removed at school (jackets, sweaters, hats) must be clearly labeled with the student's first and last name.

Montessori Tip: Placing a unique, simple mark (like a small flower or star) beside your child's name helps younger students easily recognize their own clothing before they can fully read.

Spare Clothing (Early Childhood Level)

Every Early Childhood student must keep a complete change of clothing at school (including underwear and socks).

- **Quantity:** If your child is prone to accidents or messy play, we recommend providing more than one change of clothes.
- **Packing:** Please pack the clothes in a large, zip-lock bag clearly labeled with your child's name and bring it to class during the first week of school.
- **Updates:** Remember to swap these clothes out as the seasons change or after a significant growth spurt.

Requesting Records

The administrative office requires 1-week notice when requesting a child's records. Parents' signature must accompany paperwork requesting records.

V. Discipline Policy

Creating an environment that fosters respect, concern for others, problem-solving, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the community is a cornerstone of effective discipline. Undercroft practices positive discipline, an approach that is respectful of the child and intended to support skill development in relation to self-control with awareness of others. This policy provides a framework and guidance to the parents, guides and Head of School; however, final disciplinary action will be based on individual circumstances.

Discipline and an atmosphere of order are maintained in the learning environments. Students will not be subjected to discipline that is severe, humiliating, or frightening, and will not be associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any form of physical punishment is prohibited.

Parents will be notified in writing on the day of an incident or as soon as it is known. Students are guided to resolve conflicts by example, prompts, suggestion, discussion, and tactful intervention in order to help them learn to solve their own problems. The Montessori curriculum has an extensive set of tools for conflict resolution and peace making for the student as well as the classroom community. Basic rules and expectations are regularly discussed with students. A child will be given the opportunity to take a break from a situation when needed, or may be asked to leave a situation for a brief period. Destruction of property, harming of self, or others will not be allowed. In extreme circumstances, a student may be physically removed from an area or restrained by the staff. When this is necessary, it will be done as minimally as possible.

If a discipline or behavior problem of a PERSISTENT, BUT NOT DANGEROUS OR SERIOUSLY OUT-OF-CONTROL nature occurs, the guides will speak with the parents to discuss it. Possible causes for the problem and strategies to overcome it will be considered. Another conference with the student's parents to review the situation may be set at that time. The parents and guides will work together to solve the problem. If the parents or guides are still not satisfied, then guides or parents may request a conference with the Head of School. If, after the conference, further action is required, the Head of School may place the student on probation. The student will be placed on probation for an agreed upon time, depending on the seriousness of the problem. At the conclusion of the probationary period, the parents will once again meet with the guide, any other involved faculty members, and the Head of School to determine any further action needed to best help the school meet the student's and their classmates' needs.

PSYCHOLOGICALLY/PHYSICALLY UNSAFE OR SERIOUSLY OUT-OF-CONTROL BEHAVIOR on the part of a student may necessitate immediate removal from the classroom or school until the problem can be resolved. SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS in these cases are entirely at the discretion of the Head of School. Since no appropriate place for in-house suspension exists, parents or their specified contacts in case of emergency will be notified to immediately pick up the student.

VI. Anti-Bullying Policy

Harassment, intimidation and bullying, whether through gestures, written or verbal expression, electronic communication or physical acts will not be permitted on school grounds, in school vehicles, at school-sponsored activities or at school-sanctioned events. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation, and should be reported immediately to a guide, staff member or Head of School.

VII. Student Health and Safety

Health Forms

Current health forms are required for all students. Oklahoma law requires every student to have appropriate immunizations. It is the parent's responsibility to not only keep a student's immunizations current but to also keep that student's records current in the school office or uploaded to the parent portal on our website. Certificate of Exemption forms must be presented when immunizations are not elected. You can obtain a Certificate of Exemption from the school office or from the parent portal on our website.

It is the responsibility of the parent to keep all new health related information current in the school office. Information regarding new illnesses, allergies, or disorders and booster immunizations must be updated in the school office for the safety of the student.

Illnesses and Injuries at School

Students who complain of illness will be brought to the office so the administration can notify the parents. Students with a fever at or above 100 degrees or with a suspected communicable disease will be brought to the office and parents will be notified. Students who are not well enough to function in a classroom need to be picked up from school even if they are not running a fever.



Mishaps resulting in injury will be treated immediately with basic first aid techniques. In the case of serious injury, the student's individual emergency information on file in the school office is consulted and the parents are called. In the case of a serious injury, an ambulance will be called at the discretion of staff, even if parents can be reached by phone. It is imperative that the office be kept up to date regarding emergency contact information. Minor injuries will be cleaned with soap and water. Ice will be applied if indicated. An accident form will be filled out concerning each incident and sent home to the parents.

Preventing Spread of Illness at School

Children should be given time to regain their strength and resistance before returning to school after an illness. To protect other students from possible infection, children should not attend school with any of the following:

- Not well enough to participate in school activities
- Fever of 100 degrees or more without the aid of medication; should be free of fever for at least 24 hours before returning to school
- Diarrhea or vomiting; should be free of diarrhea or vomiting for at least 24 hours before returning to school, unless determined by physician that it is not due to communicable disease
- Eye drainage, unless medical exam indicates a child may return to school

We suggested parents investigate choices for care for their sick child before illness occurs. There is usually little warning of impending illness, allowing scant time to arrange alternative care.

COVID

Undercroft will follow health guidelines published by the CDC regarding COVID. If your child tests positive for COVID, please keep them home until symptoms have improved *and* your child has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication. Please be aware, the school may require elementary through middle school students to wear a face covering indoors for up to five days upon their return to school. All students will be encouraged to practice good hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes, and washing or sanitizing hands often.

Notifications of Exposures to Communicable Illnesses or Conditions on Campus:

We ask all parents to inform the school immediately about the existence of any communicable disease or condition, which might require special precautions be taken with respect to the student, his or her schoolmates and staff. These illnesses include, but are not limited to hepatitis, tuberculosis, AIDS, meningitis, and communicable diseases such as COVID, strep throat, influenza, measles, chicken pox, "pink eye," and lice infestation. When the school has been alerted to a confirmed case of communicable illness or condition, the office will send notices to families of children in the same class so they may be alert to symptoms in their own child. Working together, we can help mitigate the spread of communicable diseases and conditions.



Medicines

- No medication can be administered without a completed Medication Form, available in the school office or on our website.
- All medications must be in the original, labeled pharmacy container with your child's name on it. This rule is for clarification in case of an allergic reaction and to help prevent any mistakes in medications. Upon parent request, most pharmacies will provide an additional labeled container to be given to the school.
- Medicines, including inhalants, must be delivered directly to the office by the parent – never sent with the student.
- Over the counter pain medications, for dispensing on an as-needed basis, occasionally needed by older students, must be provided in the original container along with a signed Medication Form.
- All medications must be given to an adult. No medications are to be in lunch boxes. If you want your child to have vitamins or nonprescription drugs, please administer them at home.

If an adult other than the parent delivers the medication to the school, a signed note from the parent stating the times and dosages prescribed and granting the school permission to administer the medicine must be provided.

Toileting Policy

Children enrolled in our early childhood program must be toilet trained before attending school and are expected to wear underwear at school.

We understand even toilet trained children will occasionally have toileting accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, our guides will help children change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible. Toilet trained children are children who:

- Communicate to guides that they need to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Alert themselves to stop what they are doing, to go and use the bathroom
- Pull down their clothes and get them back up without assistance

- Wipe themselves after using the toilet (With minimal assistance for 3-year olds)
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom
- Awaken during nap time should they need to use the bathroom

Our early childhood guides are accustomed to reminding young children throughout the day and always before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. It is not uncommon for a young 3-year-old who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when they are in a new environment. Our guides are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. Please dress your child in clothing that they can manage easily in the bathroom. Please send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season to be left at school in case of accidents, and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified through Transparent Classroom if a child has a toileting accident. Soiled clothes will be placed in a bag inside the child's school bag and sent home. Parents should send a fresh change of clothes to school the following day.



If a child is having frequent accidents, guides will reach out to parents to seek assistance and develop a plan to assure toileting independence at school.

Playground / Playscape Safety Rules

Our Playscape is a unique asset that enriches our children's experience at Undercroft. Following are guidelines for use of the Playscape, which may be adjusted as we learn from experience and as the Playscape is developed. All staff are encouraged to share their observations and experiences on use of the Playscape with colleagues and Head of School in order to develop these guidelines over time.

- **Tricycles:** Tricycles are for early childhood students and may be used on flat concrete surfaces, not sloped surfaces. Students should not pass beyond the red painted lines.
- **Slides:** Slides only go down (Feet don't walk up slides)
- **Sand Canyon:** enter and exit sand canyon where there are no fences or living things. We walk on rocks without plants; enter by going down slides; or enter/exit in places without a fence at the top.
- **Balls:** We only throw balls. We don't throw sticks, rocks, sand, snow, or other items.
- **No imaginary weapons** are allowed.
- **Amphitheater/Top Rocks:** Top rocks are for our eyes, not our bodies. Early childhood and lower elementary students may not sit or stand on the top rocks of the amphitheater.
- **Landscaping:** Children may not relocate landscaping materials, such as rocks, boulders, wood chips, etc. Children may not dig out the soil or mortar between stone or boulders.

Animals on Campus

Care of classroom animals is part of a well-designed Montessori curriculum. The level of care required by the animals will be age appropriate.

A list of classroom pets will be provided to each family. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the child's guide of any allergies or particular concerns regarding the classroom animals.

There will be no dogs or cats on campus without administrative approval. Family pets cannot be brought on campus as "show and tell" visitors without prior approval of the guide. Animals visiting from organizations such as the city zoo must also have prior approval from administration.

Alcohol

No alcohol will be consumed at gatherings on campus when there are students under the age of 21 present.

Firearms

In keeping with federal law, guns are never allowed on the grounds of a school.

Tobacco Policy

Tobacco use is prohibited on school property, including in personal and/or school vehicles, 24 hours a day, and seven days a week. This policy applies equally to all employees, vendors, visitors and students, and includes all forms of tobacco at all school sponsored events.

Cell Phone Policy

Students may not bring personal cellular or wifi capable devices to school. This applies to smartwatches and any other device with cellular capabilities. If there are special circumstances a parent wishes to be considered, please contact the Head of School, Nancy Davis at Nancy.davis@undercroft.org.

VIII. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Carpool Procedures

Undercroft has worked closely with our neighboring schools to coordinate school drop-off and pick-up times and the flow of traffic in an effort to minimize congestion and assure the safety of all our families. These procedures have been developed to assure a smooth, safe, and efficient drop-off and pick-up. At the start of each school year, we ask all our families to exercise patience during the process of establishing a strong routine. If you have questions or difficulty, please contact the Head of School.

For your child's protection, we will not release a child to someone other than a custodial parent or individuals designated in the Parent Portal. We may ask for photo identification of the person picking up your child.

- Please be patient, kind and courteous.
- The speed limit in our parking lot is **5 miles per hour**.
- Please pass through the lot in single file formation and do not pass other vehicles in line.
- There are **three** gates in our lot:

- The MIDDLE gate is for ENTRY only. (EXCEPTION: after 4:30 p.m., enter & exit through middle gate as East & West gates will be locked).
- The WEST gate is for EXIT from the Early Childhood / Lower Elementary Building
- The EAST gate is for EXIT from the Upper Elementary / Middle School Building.

- ***Families coming through the west building carpool (lower elementary and early childhood), please come from Hudson*** and turn right into our entrance gate (see map below). This will reduce the number of cars crossing lanes to enter our parking lot.
- ***Families coming through the east building carpool (upper elementary and middle school), please come from Sheridan*** (see map below) and turn left into our entrance gate. ***When exiting, please turn right going out of the east gate.*** This will reduce the number of cars crossing lanes to enter our parking lot.
- When lining up, please close the gap between you and the car in front of you to help get more cars off the street.
- Please refrain from using your cell phones, even when waiting in line. It's important to be attentive to traffic, cues from staff, and the children when in the carpool line both inside our gates and on the street.
- Please have your children ready to exit the car ***curbside*** when you pull up.
- Any animal inside of a vehicle in carpool must be crated, harnessed, or otherwise restrained so as to prevent the animal from exiting the vehicle or from coming into contact with Undercroft staff, employees, students, or other visitors.

Drop-Off:

Carpool Drop-off Time begins at 7:55 a.m. for the entire campus. Please plan to arrive as close to 7:55 as possible. This helps us move all our families through carpool before traffic begins to line up for neighboring schools. We will close our carpool promptly at 8:15 a.m.

- Early childhood and lower elementary students will be dropped off in front of the early childhood / lower elementary building beginning at 7:55 a.m. Parents will enter through the middle gate, turn right, and exit through the west gate.
- Upper elementary and middle school students will be dropped off in front of the upper elementary / middle school building starting at 7:55 a.m. Parents will enter through the middle gate, turn left, and exit through the east gate, turning right. Note: upper elementary and middle school students can be dropped off with their younger sibling(s) and walk to their own building. Parents will enter through the middle gate and exit through the west gate.

Pick-Up: Place last name placards in front windshield.

Carpool Pick-up Time is 3:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. for the entire campus (half day at 11:30 a.m.)

- Early childhood half day students will be picked up from 11:30 a.m. to 11:35 a.m. Early childhood half day students not picked up by 11:35 will be brought to the office to wait.
- Early childhood full day and lower elementary students will be picked up from 3:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Parents will enter through the middle gate, turn right, and exit through the west gate. Students not picked up by 3:30 will be brought to after care.
- Upper elementary and middle school students will be picked up from 3:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Parents will enter through the middle gate, turn left, and exit through the east gate, turning right. Note: Parents with students in both the east and west buildings should come through east building pick-up at 3:15. Students not picked up by 3:30 will be brought to after care.

UMS Carpool Map

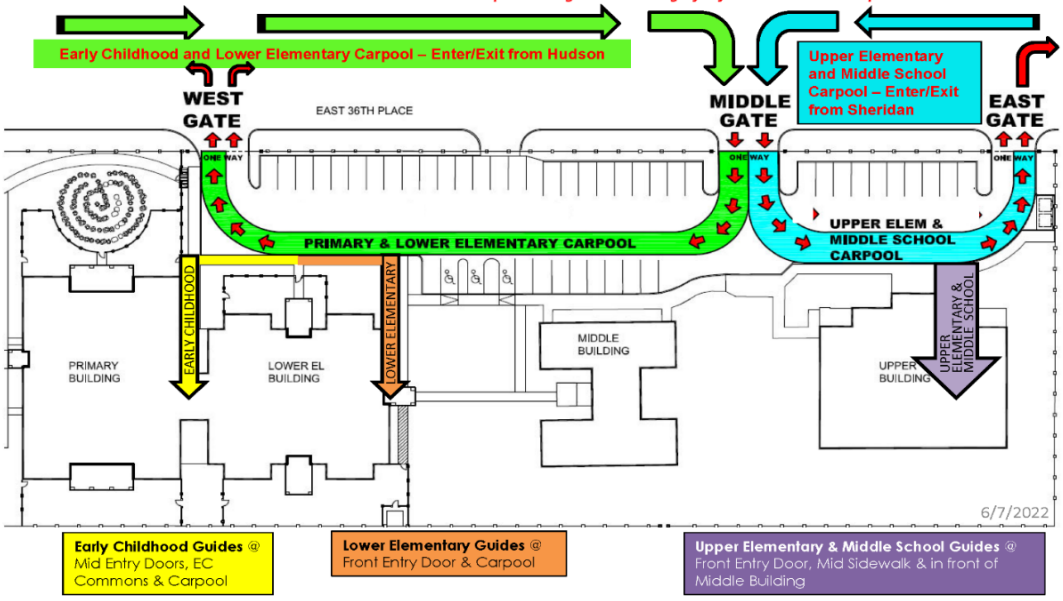
7:55 - 8:15 a.m. All School Morning Drop-off

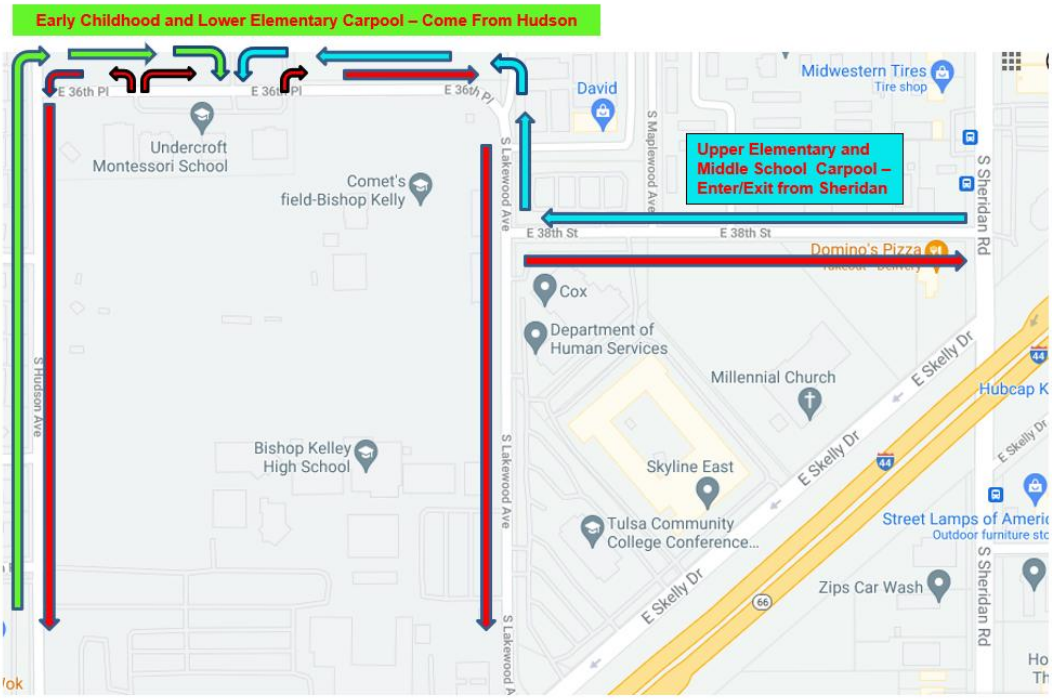
11:30 - 11:35 a.m. Early Childhood Mid-Day Pick-up

3:15 - 3:30 p.m. All School Afternoon Pick-up

Place last name placards in front windshield.

Please pass through the lot in single file formation and do not pass other vehicles in line.





Attendance, Late Arrivals, and Early Dismissals



The Montessori classroom follows a regular daily pattern that is disrupted by late arrivals and early dismissals. Good attendance ensures each student receives full advantage of the highly enriched educational program. To show proper respect to all adults and students in the classrooms and to develop the important life skill of reliability, students are expected to be at school on time.

Late Arrival: Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. should report to the office, and will be escorted to class by a member of the office staff. The office staff will enter the time of the student's arrival and 'tardy' in the attendance record.

Early Dismissal: Parents planning to pick students up prior to the end of the school day should notify their co-guides by email in advance and call the office upon arrival at the school. An office staff will instruct the parent where to come to receive their child, depending on what building they are in at the time. The office staff will pick the child up from class and deliver them to their parent at the designated meeting spot. The office staff will enter the time of the student's 'early dismissal' in the attendance record. **Please note: between 2:45 and 3:15, traffic is lining up for afternoon carpool, which begins at 3:15. Please do not attempt to pick your child up for early dismissal after 2:30. The school will not deliver students to a parent's vehicle in the street.**

Reporting Absences, Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals: Absences, late arrivals and early dismissals are marked 'excused' for illness, medical or therapeutic appointments, and religious holidays when a written notification is provided. An excused absence, late arrival or early dismissal is still an absence, and will show up on progress reports as such. An absence is counted for any student not attending at least one-half of a given day. Attendance reports appear on progress reports at the end of each semester, and include the number of absences, late arrivals and early dismissals. Parents may request a more detailed attendance report showing which absences, late arrivals and early dismissals were 'excused' from the office.

The classroom guide will communicate with parents as concerns arise about attendance, particularly when excessive absence is affecting the student's success in school. Parents should be aware that excessive absence or tardiness diminish the number of instructional days in a school year for a student, and can have an impact on decisions to advance a student to the next level at Undercroft as well as affect a student's acceptance into other schools.

Before and After School Care Programs

Before and After School Care Programs are available for enrollment on a monthly basis. In addition, spaces are available in Before and After Care with *prior arrangement only, either by contract, contract addendum or, in the case of drop in, by reservation, which may be made by submitting a request before 2:00 p.m. on the day After Care is needed. Parents who need to make a reservation for drop-in After Care after 2:00 on the day of, should call the office to verify availability.* Reservations for drop-in spaces can be made up to one week in advance.

The drop-in fee for Before Care is $6.00 per day, and for After Care is $15.00 per day. Before and After Care drop-in fees will be withdrawn monthly via ACH on the 10th of each month. Families

will receive an invoice on the 6th of each month, which will serve as notification of the amount to be withdrawn. If either of these days fall on a weekend or holiday, it will be processed on the next business or banking day.

Enrollment in an After-School Enrichment Classes does not entitle a student to attend After Care. A prior reservation, dependent upon availability of space, must be made as well as payment of $15.00. After School Enrichment tuition is paid directly to the provider of the After School Enrichment Class, whereas After Care fees are paid directly to the school.



After Care schedules and locations for each level are as follows:

Early Childhood: 3:15 – 4:30 on the Playscape, weather permitting; 4:30 – 5:30 in Early Childhood Commons

Lower Elementary: 3:15 – 4:30 in the Spanish classroom, Middle Building; 4:30 – 5:30 on the Playscape, weather permitting

Upper Elementary and Middle School: 3:15 – 4:30 in the Lower Elementary Music classroom, Middle Building; 4:30 – 5:30 on the Playscape, weather permitting

Picking Up After Care Students

From the Playscape:

When After Care is on the Playscape, a sign board will be placed at the curb by the entrance to the West Building stating which level of After Care students are on the Playscape. When picking up students from the Playscape, parents should park their cars in the west side of the parking lot and walk through the gate to the Playscape. Please make contact with one of the adults supervising students to have your child signed out of After Care.

From Indoors:

Early Childhood: Walk through the main entrance to the West Building, and use the phone in the vestibule to call the early childhood aftercare team. Dial 15 (the phone extension may be found on a sign by the phone) and tell the After Care staff who you are picking up. Staff will walk your child to you.

Lower Elementary: Walk to the main entrance to the Middle Building, and ring the doorbell by the door on the right side. Tell the staff who you are picking up. Staff will walk your child to you.

Upper Elementary: Walk through the main entrance to the West Building, and use the phone in the vestibule to call the upper elementary and middle school after care team. Dial 18 (the phone extension may be found on a sign by the phone) and tell the After Care staff who you are picking up. Staff will walk your child to you.

Late Pick-up Policy

It is essential for student's well-being to be picked up promptly from school or after-school care. However, the school recognizes that parents may occasionally be delayed by circumstances outside their control. Early childhood half day children not picked up by 11:35 will be brought to

the office to wait to be picked up; early childhood full day children not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will go to the Early Childhood After-Care Program. Lower elementary students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will go to the Lower Elementary After-Care Program. Upper elementary and middle school students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will go to the Upper Elementary/Middle School After Care program. Please notify the school, if possible, when running late.

In order to be reasonable and flexible, Undercroft allows each family two free late pick-ups under 15 minutes each after regular school hours, per school year. A charge of $15 per student will be added to the parents' account for a stay in After Care.

STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP BY 5:30 p.m. from the After-Care program. For each child not picked up by 5:30 p.m., a $10.00 late pick-up fee will be charged for the first minute, with an additional $1.00 per minute thereafter per student. Repeated late pick-ups after 5:30 will result in loss of After Care privileges.

After School Enrichment Programs

A variety of after school enrichment programs are available on campus. The offerings vary each year adding fun, fitness and balance to their educational experience. Enrichment pick up locations will vary by building. Students enrolled for enrichment classes offered in the east building will pick up their child outside in front of the east building. Students enrolled for enrichment classes in the Middle Building will pick their child up outside the main entrance of the Middle Building. Students enrolled for enrichment classes offered in the west building will pick up their child outside the mid entry of the west building at the carpool benches only. **(Parents please park your car and come to the enrichment specialist to sign your kids out.)**

Students remaining after the end of their enrichment class pick up time, will go to after care. Parents will be billed the current drop-in rate for any student delivered to after care.

IX. SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Vacations and Holidays

School closings for vacations and holidays are coordinated as closely as possible with Tulsa Public Schools and other local independent and public-school calendars. Please see the school calendar for school closing dates.

Inclement Weather

When school is closed due to inclement weather, Undercroft will notify parents by the following means:

- Text message
- Email
- Local news stations, channels 2, 6 & 8
- Undercroft's website, www.undercroft.org
- Undercroft's social media accounts

If Undercroft is closed for the morning session, it will remain closed for the afternoon session, regardless of improved conditions by the afternoon. Road conditions in your town or particular neighborhood can be hazardous even on days the school is open. Parents should use their own discretion about bringing their children to school under potentially hazardous circumstances.

Please keep us informed throughout the year of any changes in your phone contact information

X. MEALS AND SNACKS

Food Allergy Policy

Undercroft Montessori School has policies and procedures in place to protect students with severe allergies, which include:

- Parents inform the office through the Parent Portal and the student's guide in writing of any food or drink allergies or special dietary needs.
- For students with severe allergies, parents complete a *Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan* form available in the office or on our website. Guides and specialists will be confidentially informed about their students with severe allergies.
- Parents are asked to bring prescribed Epi-pens to be kept at school in case of emergency
- All staff are trained in First Aid/CPR, and Epi-pen administration
- Food purchased by the school will not contain nuts

Additionally, ***in the early childhood program, we strive to maintain a tree nut free environment***, as follows:

- Parents providing snack for the class are asked to refrain from sending any items containing nuts
- Children are instructed not to share food
- Snacks ordered by the school for aftercare will not contain nuts
- Sensitive/allergic students' families may need to provide their own snacks, if Undercroft cannot fully meet their dietary restrictions.

Lunches

Parents should inform the office through the Parent Portal and the student's guide in writing of any food or drink ALLERGIES or any SPECIAL DIETARY needs. Please indicate any allergies in the Parent Portal and if severe, complete a Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan form available in the office or on our website.



Full day students should bring a packed lunch in the morning in a lunch box with their name clearly marked on it. Please send items that require no refrigeration or use the type of lunch box that keeps food cold. Students need to pack eating utensils in their lunches when needed.

The study of nutrition is part of the curriculum. Students will learn how to choose a well-balanced diet that is low in sugar and salt. Students should be encouraged to help shop for and prepare their own lunches and snack items with good nutrition in mind.

Candy, caffeinated or carbonated beverages, and highly sweetened foods are highly discouraged in students' lunches or snacks.

All students eat lunch in their own classrooms, supervised by the classroom guides. Guides will communicate with parents when there is a concern about a student's eating habits or the contents of lunches. Younger students usually will be asked to take home any uneaten portions of their meals so parents will know what foods their children are not eating.

Beginning in October, parents may arrange to join their child for lunch at school by sending an email request to guides at least 24 hours in advance of the lunch date to prevent classroom overcrowding or possible scheduling conflicts, such as a field trip.

Community Lunches

Elementary classes periodically enjoy community lunches, where a menu is determined, families are asked to donate requested ingredients, children work together to prepare the food, and the class enjoys sharing the community lunch.

Parents should update the Parent Portal to inform the school of any food or drink ALLERGIES or any SPECIAL DIETARY needs. Please indicate any allergies on the Student Information form and if severe, complete a Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan form available in the office or on our website.

Special dietary needs will be considered in the planning of community lunches. Families may need to provide alternative ingredients or lunch options if Undercroft cannot fully meet their child's dietary restrictions.

Participatory Snack Program

Early Childhood Program

Parents are invited to provide snack items for their child's class for one week per semester. This is a voluntary program. The donation of snack is tax deductible as a non-cash gift. Guides will send a Sign-Up Genius for parents to schedule a convenient week to provide snacks. Snacks can be as simple as fresh fruits and vegetables. The children may also incorporate snack preparation and serving as a part of their Practical Life and Grace and Courtesy exercises. Suggestions for snacks will come from the classroom guides, and parents should feel free to speak with their child's guide if they wish to provide a recipe and ingredients.

Upper and Lower Elementary Programs

Upper and lower elementary students bring their own snacks with them to school. Please be sure your student packs a nutritious snack in their lunch.

Middle School Program

Snacks are provided for middle school students, who often cook class snacks as part of their practical life/cooking curriculum. Students may also bring their own snack.

Birthday Celebrations

If your child may not participate in the celebration of birthdays, please notify your child's guide.

Birthday celebrations at school are brief and low key. In the **EARLY CHILDHOOD** classrooms a short ceremony is held in which the birthday child receives a special badge and a birthday

song. The students count "the number of times the earth has gone around the sun" since the child was born. A timeline that features a picture of the child at each age is shared with the class. Parents may provide birthday snacks for the class if they wish. Highly sweetened snacks are discouraged. Consult your child's guide about what would be considered an appropriate snack.

ELEMENTARY birthdays can be recognized at either lunch or morning/afternoon group meeting time. Parents may provide birthday snacks for the class if they wish. Again, highly sweetened snacks are discouraged. Consult your child's guide about what would be considered an appropriate snack.

A voluntary donation to the classroom of a gift certificate to a bookstore is always welcomed as a way to honor the birthday of a student as well as expanding our library collection.

Parents of children whose birthdates are outside of the school year may consult the student's guide to learn how that classroom celebrates summer and other out-of-session birthdays.

If a home party is planned for a student, invitations should not be handed out at school unless everyone is invited. Likewise, if a student is attending a party after school, gifts should not be sent to school with the student. In the past, these situations have proven upsetting for those who are not invited. Invitations mailed to the homes and weekend parties help avoid hurt feelings.

Appendix A

Montessori Curriculum: Early childhood Level

PRACTICAL LIFE

Activities developing **control of movement** (gross and fine motor), focus and concentration, including games like the 'silence game' and 'walking the line'
Care of the indoor environment – e.g.: squeezing a sponge, setting and washing a table, folding, sweeping, mopping, dusting, polishing, flower arranging, pouring, opening and closing (latches, bottles, jars, doors), cutting, rolling a rug, caring for plants and animals, preparing food (cutting, spreading, straining, etc.)
Care of the outdoor environment - (ecology) e.g.: planting and gardening, weeding, sweeping
Care of the person – e.g.: dressing frames, hand washing, hanging coat, blowing nose, eating snack or lunch, cleaning spots on clothes
Social relations (grace and courtesy exercises) – e.g.: answering the phone, greeting a visitor, using manners at snack and meal time, saying please and thank you, offering someone something, passing objects, walking behind someone, taking turns, using respectful language

SENSORIAL DISCRIMINATION

Visual sense
1. Size—e.g.: cylinder blocks, pink tower, broad stair, red rods, bi- and trinomial cubes, square of Pythagoras
2. Shape-geometric shapes – circles, rectangles, polygons up to ten sides, triangles (equilateral, scalene, obtuse), quadrilateral figures, irregular curved figures
3. Color—primary, secondary, tertiary colors; shades, hues, tints
Tactile sense
1. Texture (rough-smooth)
2. Baric (weight)
3. Temperature
4. Stereognostic (recognition of 3 dimensional shapes by touch)
Taste
1. Sweet, sour, salty
2. Matching
Smell (matching)
Hearing
1. Intensity of sound
2. Pitch

LANGUAGE

Tracking Left-Right, Top-Bottom
Vocabulary enrichment throughout the curriculum, expression of ideas, listening to and telling stories, poetry, reports, descriptions of objects and pictures
Pre-writing and writing:
Development of fine motor skills and pencil grip, finger tracing sandpaper letters, movable alphabet, tracing metal insets, handwriting (manuscript)
Pre-reading and reading:
Sequencing, matching, finishing a series, classification by attributes, association of phonetic sound with sandpaper letters, initial consonant sounds, final consonant sounds, blends, digraphs, short and long vowel patterns, phonetic word patterns, non-phonetic or puzzle words, phonetic readers and reading storybooks
Reading classification:
Naming objects in the environment, classification and definition cards,
Function of words:
Verbs, nouns, articles, adjectives conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs
Reading analysis:
Simple sentences

MATHEMATICS

Quantity and Numeration:
1-10, and teens using number rods, sandpaper numerals, spindle boxes, numerals and counters
The Decimal system:
Quantities and numeration to the thousands using Golden Bead materials and cards
Basic operations
Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division using a variety of concrete materials
Linear and skip counting
Tens and teens, linear counting, skip counting
Transitional exercises*: Small bead frame, large bead frame **towards abstracting operations*
Fractions:
Introduction and basic operations, using fraction materials

CULTURAL SUBJECTS

Geography:
Sandpaper globe (land and water), continents globe, hemispheres puzzle map, continents puzzle map, U.S. puzzle map, land and water forms
Science:
Living vs. nonliving
Botany—caring for plants, nature walks, names and parts of plants, experiments, gardening
Zoology—caring for animals, nature walks, names and parts, basic classification of vertebrates
Simple science experiments
Music:
Listening, movement to music
Singing
Ear training (bells, solmization beat, rhythm, pitch),
Instrumental music
Writing and reading music
Spanish:
Vocabulary and basic conversational
Art:
Illustration of class work, basic media and techniques, styles and self-expression
Physical Education:
Fitness exercises, elements of games

Appendix A

Montessori Curriculum: Lower Elementary Level

PRACTICAL LIFE

Community ecology projects
Going out (field trips and visits by outside specialists)
Conflict resolution skills
Grace and courtesy
Class government and constitutions
Applied economics (student management projects)
Keyboard and computer skills
Animal care
Plant care
Classroom jobs
Music
Analysis and composition of music: complex songs and orchestration, composition and performance, choir
Art
Complex art techniques, advanced analysis and history
Physical Fitness
Nutrition, swimming, fitness and complex games with emphasis on skills, teamwork, sportsmanship over competition

LANGUAGE

Phonics and word patterns, spelling phonetic readers, basal readers, sight words
Word study (alphabetical order, compound words, capitalization rules, contractions, affixes, etc.)
Grammar and syntax: parts of speech, function of words
Sentence analysis
Spoken language: listening and speaking skills, reports, drama, debates
Reading comprehension: analogies, author's purpose, cause and effect, fantasy and reality, fiction/non fiction, vocabulary in context, sequence of events, predicting outcomes, drawing conclusions, summarizing, recalling details, etc.
Writing: gathering information, hypothesizing, outline, composition, editing, types of writing (poetry, story, journal, report, dialogue, descriptive, etc.)
Study skills: dictionary, encyclopedia, almanac, atlas, parts of a book, library skills, note taking, research and reference skills
Style: child's own, authors, analysis
Literature: folk tales, fables, myths, biographies, historical and science fiction
Spanish
Handwriting/Penmanship
Vocabulary

MATHEMATICS & GEOMETRY

Numeration and quantity: cardinal and ordinal numbers, place value, exchanging, estimating, rounding, odd and even, greater than/less than, prime numbers, Roman numerals, square numbers 1-10, binomials and trinomials
Mastery of operations and memorization of math facts, story problems, commutative, associative and distributive laws
Fractions: advanced operations, story problems, equivalence
Money: quantity, value, counting, story problems
Graphing, patterning, estimating, rounding
GEOMETRY:
Geometric solids
Construction of shapes
Closed plane figures: circles, rectangles, triangles, polygons, quadrilaterals, curved figures
Classified Nomenclature:
Lines: types, parts and positions of lines
Angles: parts, types and angle positions, complimentary and supplementary angles
Plane figures: types and parts of each type
Congruency, Similarity, Equivalence
Perimeter, area, volume
Measurement of angles, use of ruler, compass, protractor
Geometry word problems

HISTORY

Great Lessons: Story of the Universe, Story of the Coming of Life, Story of the Coming of Man, Story of Language, Story of Math
Concept of Time: calendar work, timeline of a child's life, months of the year, seasons of the year, days of the week, the year and its parts, clock studies (hours, minutes, seconds, half past, quarter past/quarter to, mastery of telling time
Past, Present, Future
Age of the Earth
Timeline of Life: from the Precambrian period to the Quaternary Period
Fundamental Needs of People: clothing, nutrition, transportation, shelter, defense, communication, physical health, religion and philosophy, social acceptance, art and music
Physical Health: five senses, basic anatomy, systems of the body, food pyramid and basic nutrition
Society and Civilizations: study of civilizations, research, history of child's country

GEOGRAPHY

Geography
Globe and Map studies, including map making, map reading, scale, orientation, relief, contour, latitude and longitude, cardinal directions, legends and keys
Continents and oceans of the world
Continent research: countries, capitals, flags, animals, biomes
Pin-maps (countries, capitals, mountains, rivers, lakes)
Land and water forms
Biome research: desert, woodlands, rain forest, ocean, wetlands, tundra, grasslands, savanna
Universe, solar system, earth: solar energy and the earth, movements of the earth, the atmosphere, wind
Ecology: energy chains, biosphere, atmosphere, natural cycles, the endangered spaceship earth, recycling activities
Earth Science: geological timeline, classification and use of minerals, plate tectonics, erosion, oceans, weather, clouds, precipitation
Physical Science: magnetic, non-magnetic, temperatures, matter, gases, weight, measurement, forces, simple tools, electricity, gravity, buoyancy, balance

ZOOLOGY

Vertebrates: parts of a fish, parts of an amphibian, parts of a reptile, parts of a bird, parts of a mammal
The animal kingdom: animal stories, animal research, how animals satisfy their needs
Types of vertebrates: types of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, animal riddle stories
Invertebrates: parts of a protozoa, porifera, cnidarians, echinoderm, annelid, mollusk, arthropod, nematode, platyhelminth
Classification of the Animal Kingdom: main characteristics of vertebrates and invertebrates, animal classification chart, timeline of life research

BOTANY

Living/Non-Living
Five Kingdoms
Food Chain
Classified Nomenclature:
Plant: parts, types and research
Root: parts, types and research
Stem: parts, types and research
Leaf: parts, types and research
Seed: parts, types and research
Fruit: parts, types and research
Flower: parts, types and research
Other Botany Activities: fruits and vegetables, leaf cabinet, plant pictures and labels, plant classification chart

Appendix A

Montessori Curriculum: Upper Elementary Level

PRACTICAL LIFE

Harvesting and marketing

Community ecology projects

Student planned field trips and visits by outside specialists

Conflict resolution skills and Peace Curriculum

Grace and courtesy

Class government and constitutions

Applied economics (student management projects)

Computer skills

Plant and Animal Care

Handling Money

Classroom Jobs

Music

Steel Drums Bands, percussion, teamwork, analysis and composition of music

Art

Complex art techniques, advanced analysis and history

Physical Fitness

Nutrition, swimming, fitness and complex games with emphasis on skills, teamwork, sportsmanship over competition

LANGUAGE

Advanced grammar and sentence analysis

Spelling and vocabulary development

Word study: capitalization, commas, quotation marks, hyphens, apostrophes, possessives, dictionary, thesaurus, antonyms, proofreading, punctuation

Spoken language: listening and speaking skills, reports, drama, debates

Reading comprehension: sequence, cause and effect, predicting outcomes, context clues, noting details, main idea, inferences, sentences, drawing conclusions;

Writing: sentences, paragraphs, descriptive, narrative, comparative, persuasive, 'how to', personal and business letters, poetry (haiku, sonnet, couplet, quatrain, cinquain), newspaper, journal

Literature: folk tales, fables, myths, biographies, historical and science fiction; 'reading circles' to discuss plot, character development, stetting, etc. in context of literature

Spanish

Latin

Handwriting/Penmanship

MATHEMATICS & GEOMETRY

Numeration and quantity: decimals, integers, square numbers 1-10, binomials and trinomials

Mastery of advanced operations: memorization of facts, multiples, squaring, square roots, cubing, cube roots, problem solving

Decimals: operations, conversion to fraction, fraction of decimal, rounding, ratios/cross products, percent, decimal to percent, fraction to decimal %, rate problems, base problems, percentage problems

Fractions: advanced operations, improper fractions, mixed numbers, equivalency, reducing, common factors, word problems

Pre-Algebra and logic: problem solving strategies

Ancient Civilization and mathematics of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans

GEOMETRY:

Finding areas of closed plane figures: quadrilaterals, parallelograms, triangles, polygons, curved figures

Circles: circumference, area, sector, volume

Congruency, Similarity, Equivalence

Perimeter, area, volume

Measurement of angles, compass work; constructions; Pythagorean Theorem

HISTORY

Archeological Dig

Fossil Dig

Review Time Line of Life: from the Precambrian period to the Quaternary Period

History of Mankind: Hominids, Patterns of Migration; World Ancient Civilizations, including Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Middle Ages, Explorers, Early America, Colonial Times

GEOGRAPHY

Functional Geography

Work of air, work of water, work of maps

Physical Geography: world maps, continents, oceans, rivers, lakes, mountains, desserts, plants, animals, economy

United States, Oklahoma, Tulsa: state names and capitals, bodies of water, mountains and deserts, animals and plants, economy

Cultural Geography: Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Europe, North America, Australia, South America (maps, research, reports)

SCIENCE

ZOOLOGY:

Living/Non-Living

Five Kingdoms

Gifts of Phyla

Animal Systems: Mamalia, Aves, Reptilia, Fish, Amphibia, Invertebrate

Chinese Boxes: Mamalia, Aves, Reptilia, Fish, Amphibia, Invertebrate

Plant

Fungi

Protist

Monera

BOTANY:

Nomenclatures and experiments

Appendix A

Montessori Curriculum: Middle School Level

SCIENCE

Scientific method

Scientific observation

Reporting and interpreting data

BIOLOGY

Connections between all living things

Cells: plant and animals

Cell Cycle

Characteristics and needs of living things

Classification systems: vertebrates vs. invertebrates

Study of microorganisms

Genetics and DNA

Ecosystems and population growth

Conservation of earth's resources

Pollution

PHYSICAL SCIENCE

Forces: Newton's Laws of motion, gravity, friction, electromagnetism

Speed, acceleration, velocity

Atomic structure: atoms, elements, compounds

Chemical properties

Kinetic and potential energy

Thermodynamics and transfer of energy

Types of energy (fossil fuels vs. alternative energy)

Waves and energy
Simple machines

LANGUAGE

Study of Vocabulary: word origins and etymology

Conventions: commas, colons, titles, paragraphing, parentheses, hyphens, dashes, semi-colons, proofreading, punctuation

Spoken language: listening and speaking skills, presentation skills, meeting leadership

Reading comprehension: poetry, short essays, novels focused on each cycle theme, and various personal choice novels.

Writing: writing workshops and daily practice writing in the areas of personal choice, science, social studies and health; short research papers; lab reports, creative writing pieces; poetry; apprentice famous writers; lengthy research paper; reflective essay. Peers and guides evaluate each published piece of writing using a writing rubric based on 6+1Writing Process.

Literature: literary elements; making connections to self, text, media and world; sub-text; intertextuality; gender and social norms, group literature discussions and writing about reading strategies.

Socratic Seminar: The goal of a Socratic seminar is for students to help one another understand the ideas, issues and values reflected in a specific text and to make connections to other works.

MATHEMATICS & GEOMETRY

Pre-Algebra:

Decimals: operations, conversion to fraction, fraction of decimal, rounding, ratios/cross products, percent, decimal to percent, fraction to decimal %, rate problems, base problems, percentage problems

Fractions: improper fractions, mixed numbers, equivalency, reducing, common factors, mean, median, mode and range

Advanced operations: memorization of facts, multiples, squaring, square roots, cubing, cube roots, real world word problem solving

Algebra: grouping symbols, properties and solving equalities & inequalities, solving equations, equations with exponents, sequence & series, evaluation expressions with powers, polynomials, difference of squares, factoring patterns, quadratics by factoring/formula, direct and indirect variation, calculating power, work, potential, & kinetic energy, coordinate plane, slope, graphing equations function, domain

Geometry: finding the volume and surface area of 2-D and 3-D shapes, measuring and constructing geometric figures, geometry in architecture, determining interior angles of polygons, discovering Euler's formula

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

American History: American Revolution, US Constitution, waves of immigration, Native Americans, industrial Revolution (history, causes, effects, inventions, inventors)

Exploration: Explorers (past and present), North America, other continents, space

Social Studies: economic systems, The Stock Market, overpopulation, war, peace initiatives, other local and global issues, social injustice

Tulsa, Ok: History of Tulsa and historical landmarks

Physical Geography: world maps, continents, oceans, rivers, lakes, mountains, deserts

Cultural Geography: Geographical needs of people

SPECIALS & ELECTIVES

MUSIC

Rock band, experimental band

ART

Art journal: personal record of images; made by drawing, sketching, doodling, painting, stamping and collage; Sculpture: paper mache, paper topography and clay, multi-media; Painting: Acrylic techniques; Drawing: techniques for portrait and still life.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Improving speed and endurance in the one mile run; understanding/skills in games such as football, soccer, frisbee, and kickball; sportsmanship, positive team building; upper body and core strengthening through sit-ups and push-ups.

SPANISH

Adjectives, prepositions, and present progressive verbs, Irregular verbs, present continuous tense, and beginning level direct object pronouns in context of short story

PRACTICAL LIFE

21st Century Skills

Information Literacy skills: Microsoft Outlook for email and calendar, Word, Power Point, Excel, internal drives, shared drives, online textbooks, Khan Academy online research, MLA citations, understanding bias & perspective, critical reading, propaganda

Media: presentations with Power Point, Prezi, i-movie; analyzing and evaluating advertising, documentary films, TED Talks.

Home economics: planning, shopping, preparing and serving a weekly meal; cleaning, plant and pet care; raising chickens; planting a garden, student planned three-day away and adventure trips

Independent research projects

Classroom Business: Budgeting, handling money, creating purchase orders, reporting/balancing income and expenses, customer service

Community Service: Blue Thumb – Coal Creek monitoring & conservation; Tulsa Children's Museum; Tulsa Public Library

PERSONAL WORLD

21st Century Skills

Life Skills: Flexibility, Initiative, Social Skills, Productivity, Leadership

Learning Skills: Critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborating, communicating, conflict resolution

Heroic Journey

Mindfulness: emotional regulation, stress management

Grace and courtesy

Brain Structures & Neurotransmitters

Rites of Passage

Kohlberg's 6 Stages of Moral Development

Morality and Self-Actualization

Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens

Native American Medicine Wheel

APPENDIX B

Montessori Position Paper

Authentic Montessori Community

Houston Montessori Center

Elisabeth Coe, Ph.D., Director

Private and public school Montessori programs are being implemented at an unprecedented rate. They began primarily as early childhood and elementary school programs, but are now expanding into charter schools, infant-toddler programs, middle schools, and high schools. With this rapid expansion, many factors have created tensions among administration, faculty members and sometimes parents in Montessori schools. Among these factors are administrators with little Montessori knowledge and the high focus on testing. In strong and successful Montessori school programs, this tension has been overcome with a collaborative approach. Administrators need support in understanding the true reason for Montessori academic success--a physical, social, and emotionally safe environment. This environment consists of more than academic materials, record keeping, and assessments. It is the result of highly educated teachers who have thorough knowledge of child development and understand how students learn, what motivates progress, and how to observe students and make a match between a student's skills and optimal challenge in the curriculum. This position paper, outlining the basic cultural values of a Montessori classroom, is submitted to support administrators, Montessori teachers, parents, and Montessori teacher educators. Its focus is on the way an authentic Montessori community looks, acts, and feels:

How it looks:

- The classroom environment should be an environment designed primarily for students with traditional teacher items kept to a minimum. Large desks, chairs, personal mementos are best kept in an office or other space.
- The environment is clean and esthetically pleasing, free from unnecessary visual distractions and clutter.
- The teachers and children move around the classroom slowly and quietly with a sense of purpose.
- The teachers meet the children at eye level in order to communicate.
- Communication is open and authentic; body language is consistent with verbal messages.
- Teachers are seen as supportive of success and constructive in their assessments.
- Teachers frequently take time to observe the class as a whole and to reflect on their observations in order to personalize the curriculum for individual learners' skills and learning styles and offer the right amount of challenge.
- As a result of their observations, teachers are able to anticipate problems and intervene before disruption occurs. At the same time, teachers do not intervene if students can solve their own problems.
- Students do not spend their time waiting unproductively.

How it Sounds:

- Teachers and students go up to people they are addressing and speak softly in a natural way.
- Teachers and students speak positively and with respect to one another.
- Encouragement is highly valued because it gives positive feedback to progress at any level.
- Choices and alternatives are offered within acceptable limits.
- Problems are solved more by listening rather than by talking. There is a structured method of problem solving.
- Personal silence is valued as a way to concentrate, reflect, and develop the "inner voice"

necessary for metacognition. At the same time, dialogue with peers and teachers is a valuable learning tool. Small group and individual lessons are done quietly and at the student's eye level.
- Interruptions are kept to an absolute minimum.

What it feels like:
- Learning is joyful and self-calming.
- The teachers and students feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe.
- With the introduction of new information, teachers learn to value their own and their students' disequilibria when it precedes valuable growth and learning.
- There is a mutual trust built into the community based on commitment to consistency in the ideas that everyone belongs, no one is excluded.
- The teachers and students assume consistency and dependability are the cornerstones of the trust they feel.
- The teachers and students know that choices are available and that poor choices result in consequences. Choices can be in the form of multiple intelligence, learning style, content, order, and timing. Students are encouraged to make choices that are acceptable to the larger community.

In order for this to happen, administrators must actively seek knowledge of Montessori philosophy and human development. A course through an accredited Montessori teacher education program will enable them to:

1. Set reasonable standards for teachers and students that they can understand and achieve within a reasonable time frame.
2. Use teacher assessment formats that are harmonious with Montessori philosophy.
3. Allow unbroken work periods of two to three hours for completion of tasks.
4. Keep interruptions to the teachers and students to a minimum with announcements only at certain pre-scheduled times of the day.
5. Encourage progress for the student-body as a whole, while avoiding competitions and rewards for the few.
6. Speak naturally but softly when addressing children and teachers in the classroom and hallways.
7. Use positive messages that involve positive choices.
8. Maintain an aesthetic, visually pleasant environment that is maintained daily.
9. Ask questions; listen to replies, encourage participation in problem solving.
10. Learn to trust the teachers and students by considering them as members of the community who will adhere to the larger community standards.
11. Establish a physical, social, and emotionally safe environment in order for academic successes to be realized.

Maria Montessori describes the essence of a healthy school environment as follows:

"*What we all desire for ourselves, namely not to be disturbed in our work, not to find hindrances to our efforts, to have good friends ready to help us in times of need, to see them rejoice with us, to be on terms of equality with them, to be able to confide and trust in them--this is what we need for happy companionship. In the same way children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of the greater possibilities of their future. What we desire, they desire also.*"