



Pioneer Montessori School

FAMILY HANDBOOK



## *Table of Contents*

### 1. OVERVIEW & GENERAL INFORMATION

- Welcome Parents
- Statement to Parents
- Parent Partnership
- Our Vision
- Pioneer Montessori School Philosophy
- A Brief History of Pioneer Montessori School
- Dr. Maria Montessori & Montessori Approaches to Learning
- The Three Year Cycle
- Programs
  - PrePrimary Program
  - Primary Program
  - Elementary Program
- The Montessori Curriculum
- Social Development
- Characteristics of a Montessori Learner

### 2. ADMINISTRATION, GUIDELINES & ADMISSIONS

- Hours of Operation & Contact Information
- Administrative Structure
  - Board of Directors
  - Parents' Association
- Parent-Staff Communication/Resolution Procedures
  - Communication Channels
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Problem Solving
- Attendance
- Discipline Policy, Code of Conduct
  - Behavior Intervention and Resolution
  - Dismissal/Removal from Class
  - General Discipline Guidelines for Home
- Admissions
  - Enrollment Requirements
  - Application Process
  - Sibling Application
  - New Parent & Child Orientation
  - New Child Orientation
  - Phasing in Young Children
  - Phasing in Older Children
  - First Conference & Home Visit
- Non-Discrimination Statement

### 3. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Classroom Observations
- Parent Education Opportunities
  - Montessori Education Nights
  - Parent Association Meetings
  - Morning About Meetings
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Fund Raising and Volunteering
  - Fund Raising

- Annual Giving
- Spring Fundraiser
- Harvest Festival

#### 4. EVERYTHING ELSE YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW: A TO Z

- Air Quality
- All Day Montessori
- Allergies
- Alumni Visits
- Applying to Other Schools
- Arrival & Dismissal
- Attendance
  - Absence or Tardiness
  - Excessive Absenteeism and Tardiness
- Birthdays
- Cell Phone Use
- Child Abuse
- Child Custody
- Class Placement & Eligibility
- Clothing
  - Costumes
  - Two-Shoe System
  - Diapers
- Collection Policies
  - Returned Checks
- Community Service
- Contact Information & Correspondence
- Discipline Policy
- Donations of Merchandise
- Drug Abuse
- Emergencies, Illness, and Accidents
- Emergency Safety Plans
- Field Trips
- Financial Aid & Scholarships
- Forms
- Food
  - Lunches
  - Snacks
- Friday Notes
- Gifts
- Harassment Policy
  - Harassment
  - Sexual Harassment
  - Inappropriate Behavior
  - Reporting Harassment
- Head Lice
- Health & Wellness Policy
- HIV/AIDS Policy
- Holiday Celebrations
- Injuries
- Job Openings
- Lost & Found
- Medication at School
  - Over the Counter Medication
  - Prescription Medication
- Outdoor Time

- Parent Education
- Parking & Traffic Guidelines
- Phone Calls & Messages
- Pick-Up & Drop-Off
- Playground Rules
- Probation & Termination Policy
- Problem Solving Procedures
- Recycling
- Release of Children Authorization
- Room Parents
- Scholarships
- School Closure
- School Directory
- Severe Allergen Policy
- Sharing & Toys
- Social Media Policy
  - Pioneer Montessori School's Facebook Page
- Student Internet Use Policy
- Student Records
  - Maintenance of Records of Previously Enrolled Children
- Sunscreen Policy
- Transportation
- Tuition & Fee Schedule
- Tuition Enrollment Agreement
  - Tuition Enrollment Agreement for PrePrimary Students
  - Continuous Enrollment for Primary and Elementary Students
- Website

## 5. GLOSSARY OF MONTESSORI TERMS

**OVERVIEW &  
GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **Welcome Parents**

*and thank you for making this journey with us!*

A few words of inspiration from Heads of Montessori schools everywhere...

*“The beginning of the school year is the continuation of a journey that our children began at birth. This journey is one that focuses all of their energy and is the purpose of all their work. The children move, observe, listen, and explore to discover themselves. This journey doesn’t have a particular destination or an end. It is the path they move along, as they become the person they are going to be.*

*I am certain that chef Julia Child and Google founder Sergey Brin did not know what they were going to do or who they were going to be when they began in their Montessori schools at the age of 3. However, they quickly realized that in this place – their Montessori classroom—they were allowed to find out.*

*This journey, which is a physical, intellectual, and spiritual one, takes place for all people in all places in the world. It is not only Montessori children who embark on it. However, a Montessori school is a wonderful place designed with this one goal in mind: allowing the child to create him/herself. This one goal has many, many parts and it is an awesome task to make sure that everything is in place for this to happen.*

*Each environment has the elements the child might need for the journey. It has room for movement, materials for exploration, a community of peers, and the freedom to discover and work. It provides opportunities for purposeful work, intellectual exploration, social interaction, and peaceful reflection. It is inspiring and creative and limitless in its possibilities for learning.*

*Returning to or beginning school this year, the children embark on an exciting part of their journey. Our promise to our parents is that Montessori schools will prepare the environment so that with every step of the journey they can reach their full potential – every step will bring them closer and closer to that unique individual they are to become.”*

## **Statement to Parents**

In the proceeding pages we discuss our beliefs about, expectations of, and intentions with parents and families of our students. Our fundamental premise is that we have selected a staff of talented, competent, responsible adults, and that you, in turn, have chosen Pioneer Montessori School as the place you want to be. These individual decisions are based on our shared vision of what education and the Pioneer Montessori School community has to offer. Families with a child(ren) enrolled at Pioneer Montessori School become an integral part of our school community. When joined by a common set of beliefs and purposes, the school and its parents form a powerful team with far-reaching positive effects on children and the entire community. To be a successful community, the school needs and expects the cooperation of its parents, who must embrace the school’s mission, share its core values and fully support its curriculum, faculty and staff. The enrollment of your child at Pioneer Montessori School indicates the parents’ willingness to abide by the Family Handbook.

## **Parent Partnership**

*“In the education of the child, there are three important roles: the child, the parent, the teacher. Each role is unique, essential, and interrelated. Like the side of an equilateral triangle, each role is a distinct and separate part, and yet, each connects directly with every other.”*

The Power of Three by Carol Cherin

We come together as a school not only with our vision and personal stories, but also with expectations of and responsibilities to each other. We will promote the highest quality, professional, consistent and respectful school environment. We will support each person’s personal and professional endeavors to

the best of our ability. In turn, we expect each of you to be 100% accountable for your performance and to work collaboratively with all other members of our community. We expect you to stay informed of school matters by attending education nights and other school functions, reading Friday Notes and other available Pioneer Montessori School literature, participating in Annual Giving and the Parents' Association and all it has to offer, and ultimately, revel in the sharing of progressive education.

Parents are the child's first and most important educators. Pioneer Montessori School emphasizes the importance of the family in the child's development and seeks to create a partnership with parents. Such a partnership is a two-way, interactive process.

The child's fullest development demands involvement of both the family and the school. The parents and school engage in an ongoing dialogue centered on the needs of the child. Parents grow and learn along with their child—and the school grows through its collaboration with parents.

Parent partnership goes beyond parent education. Parents cannot just be passive recipients of teaching by the school, but must evolve into active teachers and contributors in turn. Together, staff, parents, and children become a community of learners, able and willing to receive and to give back.

Parent involvement is crucial, and includes participation in education, social, and financial aspects of the school community.

### ***Our Vision***

Pioneer Montessori School, following the vision of Dr. Maria Montessori, provides education for life by nourishing every child's lifetime love of learning. Our age appropriate environments are designed to teach the whole child and empower each student to realize his or her own potential.

Pioneer Montessori School recognizes and nurtures the child's individual academic needs while following the child's innate desire to create his or herself. We promote the acquisition of skills by providing a cooperative environment where students' work is both self-directed and director guided, thus developing the child's independent thinking skills.

At Pioneer Montessori School we strive to cultivate compassion, instill confidence and awaken consciousness for oneself, others and the world that surrounds us.

### ***Pioneer Montessori School Philosophy***

*“Our care of children should be governed not by the desire to ‘make them learn things’, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within them the light which is called intelligence.”*

Dr. Maria Montessori

The Pioneer Montessori School community works to create an environment that inspires children to achieve concentration, self-assurance and love of learning. Pioneer Montessori School remains dedicated to the Montessori philosophy and method of education through the senses. The organized use of classroom materials promotes the growth of self-discipline and fulfillment of the child's needs. The materials for the younger children take advantage of the child's desire to use their hands, to develop the mathematical mind, language and movement. For older children, students direct their own education in a more organized manner, and are provided many areas of interest to learn about through study.

Some of the areas that children in a Montessori environment are commonly exposed to include:

- Grace and courtesy
- Use of manners and social customs
- Respect of others and their work
- Respect of their own work
- Care for self, others and materials

- Self-confidence, independence and self-discipline
- Fostering the love of learning
- Building and fostering concentration
- Security and trust
- Sensory skills
- Number sense and an understanding of mathematical concepts
- Language learning through spoken, written and reading
- Guiding language learning to phonic reading and phonograms study
- Promoting curiosity through exploration and discovery with hands doing the work of the mind
- Developing habits of persistence and initiative
- Instill appreciation for the world near and far
- Supporting creative intelligence and imagination
- Positively contribute to community

### ***A Brief History of Pioneer Montessori School***

In the summer of 1980, Pioneer Montessori School began as the dream of one teacher and a small group of committed parents who sought to provide the best education possible for their children. That fall, 18 students (ages 2 through 5) started school. Karen Oswald Levy taught in the one-room classroom during the day and slept in the upstairs loft at night. Thus, began the tradition of Pioneer Montessori School in the Wood River Valley. Four children graduated kindergarten in the spring of 1981 and as enrollment grew, so did the need for more space. In the fall of 1981 the school was incorporated, and Pioneer Montessori School moved to its current location at Second Avenue.

Pioneer Montessori School has grown exponentially since its days as a single classroom with 18 students and in 2005, welcomed Liza Weekes as the new Head of School. Originally trained as an Assistance to Infancy Montessori teacher, Liza took on the Head of School position while still running the Toddler Room. Working with students in the mornings and in the office in the afternoons.

For several years Pioneer Montessori School functioned in three different locations completing several remodels to accommodate the growing student body. In March 2009, the school purchased the adjacent building on Second Avenue and realized the vision of a single, cohesive campus. From its humble beginnings to the current five classroom school, it has continued to thrive and has been a source of inspiration for numerous students. Pioneer Montessori School continues to grow in its mission to provide students in the Wood River Valley an authentic Montessori education. It strives to cultivate compassion, instill confidence and awaken consciousness for oneself, others and the world that surrounds us.

### ***Dr. Maria Montessori & Montessori Approaches to Learning***

In the early 1900s, Dr. Maria Montessori, Italy's first woman physician, developed educational materials and methods based on her observation that children learn best by doing, not by passively accepting other people's ideas and pre-existing knowledge. Dr. Montessori believed learning should occur in multi-age classrooms where children at various stages of development learn from and with each other. Her advice was always, "Follow the child."

The Montessori approach succeeds because it draws its principles from the natural development of the child. The first level of development is known as the First Plane of Development and occurs from birth to age 6. At this stage, children are sensorial explorers, constructing their intellects by absorbing every aspect of their environment, their language and their culture. From age 6 to 12, the Second Plane of Development, children become conceptual explorers. They develop their powers of reason, abstraction and imagination, and apply their knowledge to discover and expand their worlds further. This is evident in the classroom environment as well as in the development of their social

interactions. Schools are organized to reflect these stages; PrePrimary 18 months – approximately 3 years, Primary classrooms 3-6 years, Lower Elementary 6-9 years and Upper Elementary 9-12 years.

The Montessori guide's role is to inspire, "enthusing (the child) to her inner most core." (Dr. Maria Montessori, from *To Educate the Human Potential*). The classroom guide creates a dynamic classroom where children are free to work and explore in an orderly environment; s/he is there to help and encourage the children in their efforts, allowing them to develop self-confidence and inner discipline. Knowing how to observe constructively and when to intervene is one of the most important talents the Montessori guide acquires through Montessori education and experience.

### ***The Three Year Cycle***

The Three Year Cycle is an intricate component of the Montessori philosophy and students are strongly discouraged from departure prior to the completion of each cycle. The success of a classroom is dependent on each child benefitting from the students that have come before and therefore a prepared group of children is essential for the success of all. Montessori classroom environments are designed with an overarching three year curriculum embedded with developmentally appropriate materials and unique lessons specific to Montessori education. Socially, multi-aged classroom dynamics enable students the opportunity to be both mentee and mentor; to become the leaders they once looked up to and modeled as first and second years in the classroom. Three years with the same classroom guide provides an atmosphere of trust and a deeper relationship between guide and student. Classroom ages are determined by Dr. Maria Montessori's careful observation of the different Planes of Development and their sub-planes. Students who do not complete the three year cycle in any of our environments will not experience the program to its full potential and will therefore not benefit from the Montessori Methodology as it was established in the early 1900's.

### ***Programs***

#### **PrePrimary Program (18 months to approximately 3 years of age)**

The Pioneer Montessori School's toddler program allows your child to enjoy a Montessori experience in a small group setting. The children have an opportunity to explore and experiment in an environment that has been carefully prepared to meet the unique needs of this age. All of the furniture is sized to allow for maximum independence and the Montessori materials are stimulating and inviting.

First friendships are formed and social skills developed. Toddlers are in the first "plane" of development and experience what Dr. Montessori described as "sensitive periods". These are times in the child's life when s/he shows an almost obsessive interest in a particular activity essential to growth. The acquisition of language is an example of this, and correct and complete language is just one of the many skills fostered in our toddler community.

A supportive atmosphere for parents as they watch their toddlers grow into independent three year olds is offered through ongoing communication including two formal parent teacher conferences.

#### **Primary Program (3 to 6 years of age)**

The Primary environment is designed as a Child's House ("Casa dei Bambini"). Children choose their work from self-correcting materials displayed on open shelves after the appropriate lesson from the classroom guide. Over a period of time, the children develop into a "normalized community," working with high concentration and few interruptions. Normalization is the process whereby a child moves from being undisciplined to self-disciplined, from disorder to order, from distracted to focused, through work in the environment. The process occurs through the phenomenon of concentration, as the repeated work with materials that captivate the child's attention promotes and aids their self-construction. In the Montessori Primary classroom, academic competency is a means to an end, and the manipulatives are viewed as "materials for development".

### Elementary Program (6 to 12 years of age)

The elementary program offers a continuum built on the Primary environment. Like the Primary classroom, the Montessori materials are a means to an end. They are intended to evoke the imagination, then aid abstraction to generate a worldview about the human task and purpose. Students' desire for community and citizenship fosters their social and moral development. The child begins to ask questions about the origins of the universe, the nature of life, people and their differences, and so on. On a factual basis, interdisciplinary studies combine geological, biological, and anthropological science in the study of natural history and ecology. Students are also in a sensitive period for reading. Studies are integrated not only in terms of subject matter but in terms of moral learning.

### ***The Montessori Curriculum***

*“My vision of the future is no longer people taking exams and proceeding then on that certification... but individuals proceeding from one stage of independence to a higher (one), by means of their own activity through their own effort or will, which constitutes the inner evolution of the individual.”*

Dr. Maria Montessori

In a Montessori classroom, four areas are set up to constitute a prepared environment, which include:

- **PRACTICAL LIFE**
  - Care of the environment – cleaning up
  - Care of self
  - Concentration on using hands, eye-hand coordination
  - Grace and large body control
  - Courtesy and manners, allowing the child to be responsible for their behavior
- **SENSORIAL**
  - Utilization and development of the discriminatory powers of all the senses
  - Visual discrimination is initially dominant and later touch, feel, smell and hearing are explored with appropriate vocabulary
- **LANGUAGE**
  - Includes: basic phonics, correct speech, pronunciation and articulation; vocabulary awareness, extensions and organizations; reading skills, comprehension, songs, poems, and an appreciation of words
  - Developing the ability to use language in their relationships, for expressing their feelings and for communication with children and adults
- **MATHEMATICS**
  - Understanding numbers, numerals, decimal systems and counting
  - Exposure to operations of addition and multiplication
  - Geometry: recognizing shapes, knowing vocabulary, understanding solids and solid vocabulary
  - Viewing mathematical and geometrical concepts with concrete materials

Other academic areas that Montessori children are exposed to include:

- **CULTURAL AREAS**
  - Includes anything and everything to allow a child to follow an interest, to create excitement, to stimulate, to broaden his or her world, to explore the universe and its function
- **SPANISH**
  - At a young age, students are exposed to native Spanish speakers as they are in a sensitive period for the absorption of language
  - Older students begin the Organic World Language (OWL) program; focusing on the acquisition of Spanish through full immersion and engaging in constant, relevant conversation
  - The objective is for students to graduate “speaking Spanish” rather than having “taken Spanish classes”

- ART
  - At the earliest it is an extension of using hands in manipulating brushes, paints, chalk, pastels, crayons, pencils, clay, and any other available art medium
  - With age comes exposure to color, form, and design
  - Introduction to artists, to the arts and how they differ
  - Art is the talent to manipulate the medium and the freedom to create
- MUSIC
  - As an extension of speech – learning lyrics, basic melody, and rhythm
  - The introduction of rhythm and the exploration of it using voice and instruments
  - Recognition of pure tones
  - Introducing our system of musical tones, practicing singing, listening to music from around the world
- GEOGRAPHY
  - Introduced very early as puzzles and small motor activities along with stories from around the world
  - As soon as possible, geography is used to bring an awareness of and respect for the differences in people and what they do as well as our similarities and shared fundamental needs
  - Geography is also defined as a course of study – the world and everything in it

Each child follows his or her curriculum from various sources. The main force is the drive within each child, and then comes the direction towards areas of interest, exploring new things, peers and older children. As the child grows older, they are driven to work more with their peers and the curriculum becomes more group oriented. The child will have an education geared toward his or her needs, wants, and interests as well as preparing a child to enter society. Later, s/he also learns to do work that was previously passed over or deemed too difficult by him/her at an early age. The Montessori Method recognizes that children do not do the same work at the same time, at the same age, or in the same way. All children discover their individual path of learning.

### ***Social Development***

The task of the First Plane child (0-6) is to construct his/herself as an individual with functional independence: the ability to take care of one's own personal needs. The task of the Second Plane child (age 6-12) is to construct his/herself as a social being with intellectual independence: the ability to think for oneself. To aid in this self-construction the elementary age child exhibits particular psychological characteristics: a reasoning mind, imagination, conscience, a sense of justice, and sensitivity to the group or community.

The classroom guide recognizes these characteristics and works with the students to establish classroom rules, procedures and guidelines for conflict resolution. Following the basic foundation to maintain respect for oneself, each other and the environment. The students are prepared to enter into the larger society with the ability to follow its laws because of their experience in the smaller "practice society" of the classroom.

### ***Characteristics of a Montessori Learner***

Classroom guides aim to help foster Montessori characteristics in each of their students. The child...

- is both an observer and a participant
- is respectful and aware of each person and their process - which comes with the emergence of the will and consciousness
- recognizes s/he is a valued member of the community - they have a voice and what they say is important and their actions contribute to the function of the environment
- has confidence to take chances - making mistakes is encouraged, discovery results from exploration and challenging oneself
- is gracious, courteous, empathetic and considerate

- is self-directed, independent, and self-aware
- is self-disciplined, accountable, and responsible
- is creative – can problem solve, investigate, and inquire
- displays impulse control – control of body and movements
- is curious, interested and ambitious – with an awe and wonder about the world
- is refined – practices and revisits until inner need is satisfied
- shows peaceful concentration

**ADMINISTRATION, GUIDELINES & ADMISSIONS**

## ***Hours of Operation & Contact Information***

### Contact Information

Main Phone	(208)726-9060
Fax	(208)725-7885
Website	www.pioneermentessorischool.org
General Email	administration@pioneermentessorischool.org
Physical Address	211 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave North Ketchum, ID 83340
Mailing Address	PO Box 1809 Ketchum, ID 83340

*For staff and parent contact information, please see your current school directory or contact the Administrative Offices.*

### Office Hours

Monday – Friday                      8:00am – 4:00pm

*The Offices are closed on school holidays. Please see your current school calendar for specific dates. Office hours are modified during Summer Break.*

## ***Administrative Structure***

### Board of Directors

Pioneer Montessori School is a non-profit corporation. The school is run by a Board of Directors that are recruited from current school parents, alumni and grandfriends. There is an Executive Committee comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Community Chair. Board members serve on committees that include Campus, Development, Marketing, Finance, and Governance.

The Board is responsible for hiring the Head of School and setting and approving policies and school budget. The Head of School's responsibilities include: reporting on the state of the school at Board meetings; hiring, retaining and evaluating staff; arbitrating conflict resolutions; and making admission decisions.

### Parents' Association

The Parents' Association (PA) is a committee of parents established to foster and support events for the children and families to promote fun, education and a sense of community. The PA promotes communication among parents, staff, administration and the Board of Directors and offers the parents a forum to learn more about the Montessori Philosophy and School. The PA spearheads fundraising activities and is the driving factor behind fundraising events such as the Harvest Festival, Holiday Parties, Spring Fundraiser, End of the Year Celebration and more.

There is an Executive Committee of the PA made up of four parents: the Community Chair, Room Parent Chair, Philosophy and Education Chair, and Fundraising Chair. This committee meets five times a year in October, December, February, April, and June. The Executive Committee strives to reach out and meet the needs of the school community.

Open PA meetings take place five times a year in September, November, January, March and May. In these open meetings, parents discuss upcoming calendar events, there is a report from the Head of School and the Board of Directors, and often a Montessori education and philosophy forum. Please see your current school calendar for specific dates.

## ***Parent-Staff Communication/Resolution Procedures***

### Communication Channels

Open communication between parents and staff is essential to a positive educational experience for your child. We at Pioneer Montessori School wish to work with parents to answer questions and

solve problems as quickly and effectively as possible. As parents, you need to know exactly where to go to get information or voice concerns.

Parents are expected to support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the faculty or staff member closest to the issue. The use of mass emails or conversations at casual social events to contact fellow parents about sensitive issues involving Pioneer Montessori School, school policy, personnel or students is inappropriate and counterproductive.

The following communication channels should be a handy reference:

<u>Matter Related to:</u>	<u>First Contact:</u>
Child's progress	Classroom Guide
Classroom activities	
Classroom assistant	
Class procedures	
All Day Montessori program	All Day Montessori Staff &/or
All Day Montessori assistants	Business Manager
All Day Montessori procedures	
Pedagogical issues	Head of School
Academic policy	
Admissions	
Parent education	
Development	
School Finances	Business Manager
Facilities	
Legal matters	
Fundraising Financials	
Billing/accounts	
Changes in tuition	
School Calendar	Administrative Office
Student records	
Observations	
Registration	
Public relations	
Fundraising Logistics	
Student Absences	

#### Conflict Resolution

When problems arise, resolution should follow these steps:

1. If you have a question regarding your child, ask his or her classroom guide. Guides are your first resource to answer your questions and resolve your difficulties.
2. If the classroom guide is unable to resolve the question, please set up an appointment regarding your situation with the Head of School.
3. If the Head of School is being a ninny, please set up an appointment with a current Board Member regarding the situation. (First parent to catch the use of the word ninny in the Family Handbook will receive a high five from the school's Administrator.)

We desire to do the very best for your child. When we handle areas of concern quickly and with care, we achieve our goals for your child with limited disruption.

### Problem Solving

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's guide with questions or concerns at any time during the school year, and not limit themselves to conference times. Kindly avoid asking to speak to the guide during class time, either in person or on the telephone. Instead, email or call and leave a message for the guide in the school office. The classroom guide will return your call during non-teaching times. Parents are requested to direct their questions to the child's guide rather than to the classroom assistant.

Pioneer Montessori School encourages problem solving through communication among the parties directly involved. Request a meeting with your child's guide to discuss class issues. If after meeting with the guide, the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may ask for assistance from the Head of School in facilitating further communication with the guide.

The staff and administration have developed guidelines for addressing possible student behavioral and/or performance difficulties as they arise, which generally include faculty observations and suggestions, parental discussions, documentation and referral. The teacher will discuss options and formulate a plan of action in conjunction with the parents.

Following this process will allow everyone to focus on the most positive educational experience for the child.

### ***Attendance***

Regular attendance for all students is ideal in accomplishing our communal goals. Consistency adheres to a child's need for order and reduces incidences of drop off anxiety and inappropriate classroom behavior. While the school acknowledges that there may be cases of special family events that might preclude attendance, we encourage you to make school routine and attempt to schedule family holidays around the school calendar.

Inconsistent attendance at all levels is problematic because of community and academic expectations. If a student will miss a significant period of time at school, it is important for parents to communicate with the classroom guide ahead of time in order to make arrangements.

When planning family vacations, look carefully at the school calendar. While we understand that vacations involve planning around many different schedules, please keep in mind that Parent Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. There is no school on conference days, but it is still very important that you stay in town in order to talk with your child's guide. Please don't plan to be away during this time.

See also: *Attendance* under *Everything Else You Might Want to Know: A to Z*

### ***Discipline Policy, Code of Conduct***

The Montessori Methodology nurtures self-discipline and autonomy, which develops over a period of many years. The basis of discipline is respect: respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment. The adults and children in the prepared environment set limits for behavior based on the group's need for a safe and mutually respectful community.

If a student has difficulty following the rules of the community, the response will be age appropriate. Personal attention, redirection, substitution and/or removal from the situation are typical approaches. Many instances resolve themselves as the student, within the bounds of safety and common sense, experiences the logical consequences of his or her actions (i.e., wiping up after throwing a paint can on the floor).

If the student disregards the rules of the classroom community, the guide and Head of School seeks the underlying causes in order to help the student understand the inappropriateness of his or her

actions and to find a constructive alternative. If such behavior occurs repeatedly, the guide may request the Head of School or other staff/faculty to observe and offer consultation before the parents are contacted for their support and cooperation.

#### Behavior Intervention and Resolution

*“To let the child do as he likes when he has not yet developed any powers of control, is to betray the idea of freedom.”*

Dr. Maria Montessori

Pioneer Montessori School’s first responsibility is the physical, psychological, and emotional safety of all children. Respect for oneself, each other, and the environment are the basic ground rules of the Montessori community, which includes all staff, children and parents. Order, respect, and self-control are expected as normal social behavior. Our school fosters the development of self-discipline with a sensible balance between freedoms and limits. Our classrooms are designed to have freedom with responsibility and students are only given the autonomy and independence that they are developmentally capable of handling.

With this philosophy in mind, the classroom guide and the student handle minor disciplinary problems. It is made clear that it is the child’s action and not the child that is in question. Students are redirected and asked to explore alternatives to the behavior and to examine the effects of this behavior on others. Understanding how their actions affect others and vice versa, helps them develop a sense of responsibility for their actions.

The classroom guide, with the help of the Head of School, deals with more serious or recurring problems and parents are notified. Certain disciplinary problems will result in parental involvement, recommendations for outside professional help and evaluation, suspension and/or termination from the School if deemed or warranted. Information on professional services to assist children with special needs is available through the Head of School.

The school reserves the right to take reasonable measures to restrain any child who presents a risk of harm to him or herself or others.

#### Dismissal/Removal from Class

**In extreme circumstances, Pioneer Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss a child from the school when it is deemed by the Head of School that to do so will be in the best interest of the school and the child. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, the student’s failure to complete school work at an acceptable level, the student’s behavior or lack of cooperation is deemed unacceptable, the student, parent, or guardian’s behavior is detrimental or disruptive to the Pioneer Montessori School community, failure to abide by the Pioneer Montessori School’s Code of Conduct and/or Family Handbook, or if tuition payments are overdue.**

Consistent with our purpose and objectives, our staff will help children develop good behavioral habits by emphasizing positive behavior as it occurs.

Staff members will establish for the children limits that are clear, fair, appropriate and consistently applied. They will patiently explain to the children the reasons for these limits, making them understandable. They will, when necessary, redirect children to more acceptable and appropriate activities and types of behavior, recognizing that one of the most effective ways of modifying behavior is to provide a positive alternative model that the children internalize and copy. Helping a child use acceptable words to deal with his or her frustration or resolve conflicts can be done both directly and by example. Our classrooms are not designed to have authority or control over our students, they are designed to foster self-discipline. Students or parents in need of a different approach may be encouraged to find another educational model to better suit these needs.

Because we believe and follow the above positive approach with children, we do not permit or allow physical punishment in any form. In addition, staff members shall neither force nor withhold meals or snacks; neither force nor withhold naps; nor punish toileting accidents.

Verbal messages shall demonstrate understanding and respect for each child. Occasionally, a child showing inappropriate behavior at school may be helped by an early dismissal or shortened day. When a child needs to be assisted in this manner, the parents will be asked to support the guide's position and to respect the needs of their child. In accordance with Montessori ideals, this action is not viewed as a punishment, but as a way of giving the child relief from a crisis. If early dismissal is necessary, please treat your child with understanding. The guide will want to discuss the situation with you when your child is not present.

### General Discipline Guidelines for Home

The following are some general guidelines of Montessori discipline that parents should seek to apply at home as well as at School:

- Hold the student to standard: s/he will rise to expectations
- Behavior: think satisfaction and motivation versus gratification and manipulation
- Separate the denial, hurt, and suffering of growing up from real deprivation
- Make reward internal, not external
- To maintain strong, effective discipline, seek consistency and clarity
- Catch children doing something right
- Engage, interest the student
- Involve, stimulate the student
- Redirect the child from destructive, negative behavior
- Be respectful.
- Maintain unconditional love. Love is not a bargaining chip!
- Use humor to support and defuse, not to deflate. Sarcasm bites and hurts.
- Let natural consequences flow from inappropriate behavior.
- Always be honest with your child(ren)

This is just a brief introduction to Montessori discipline, there are extensive materials available in the Administrative Offices to facilitate consistency between home and school.

### ***Admissions***

#### Enrollment Requirements

Preprimary: The child must be 18 months old on or before September 1 or have permission from the Head of School

Primary: The child needs to show the maturity level of a Primary students and is approximately 3 years old on or before January 1 or have permission from the classroom Head of School. The child must be toilet trained.

Elementary: The child must be 6 years old on or before September 1 or have permission from the classroom Head of School.

Prior to starting school, a signed Tuition Enrollment Agreement, Code of Conduct, completed Contact Information packet, the child's full immunization records and any previous relevant records from other schools must be submitted to the Administrative Offices.

See also: *Tuition Enrollment Agreement* under *Everything Else You Might Want to Know: A to Z*

### Application Process

Applications are accepted for incoming students, ages 18 months through 12 years, throughout the school year and during the summer months. Because of the numerous applications Pioneer Montessori School receives, there may be a waiting list for admitting students. Applications for Admissions are available in the school Administrative Office or on the website at [www.pioneermontessorischool.org/school-information/admissions/](http://www.pioneermontessorischool.org/school-information/admissions/)

### Sibling Applications

Younger siblings are automatically offered a space at Pioneer Montessori School. The spirit of sibling admission policy is to provide cohesiveness for all children in the same family while providing an equal opportunity for all students who desire to attend the school.

### New Parent & Child Orientation

1. The orientation of new families begins with the admissions process and continues as these new families integrate into the school community. Pioneer Montessori School is sensitive to the special needs and anxieties of new children and parents as they approach a new academic setting.
2. During the admissions process, parents will meet at least twice with the Head of School including a tour of the campus and your child's future classroom.
3. One of the most helpful orientation aids is a meeting of new parents with the classroom guide before the start of school. Discussion focuses on orientation procedures, supports class social events, pertinent reiterations of the Family Handbook, and ways for families to work through a normal transition process. What is most important about the meeting is that the guide establishes a personal relationship with each new parent.
4. After the second day of school in September, all parents are asked to attend Welcome/Open House (please see your current school calendar for the exact date and time). At the Welcome/Open House night, parents are introduced to board members, faculty, and staff and have the opportunity to meet fellow parents. After a community-wide discussion, parents disperse to individual classrooms where classroom guides will outline their expectations for the school year. This evening is mandatory for all new and returning parents.
3. Parents are often more comfortable asking questions of other parents, and experienced parents can encourage involvement of new families through personal invitations. "Room Parents" are a great resource for new families and are introduced at the Welcome/Open House. New parents are strongly encouraged to attend Parents' Association meetings and can also participate in informal work sessions that provide opportunities to learn more about the classroom environment and to expand social contacts with other parents.

### New Child Orientation

Orientation is needed in any new situation. The way in which orientation is facilitated for the new child will vary depending upon the child's age and stage of development. In each classroom it is helpful to schedule an informal visit for the child to see his or her class and to meet the guides and assistants before the first day of school. Home visits in late August will also be scheduled.

Anxiety is expected when change occurs. For young children—and their parents—separation anxiety is common. It may be reflected in a child's reluctance to come to school, possibly recurring after vacations, and should be dealt with sensitively, not regarded as abnormal. Sometimes a child's separation problem is a direct reflection of the parent's anxiety.

The orientation for new parents helps them to anticipate their own anxious feelings and provides practical suggestions to help their child separate from them during the transition of the first days. Simple guidelines for drop-off can help parents convey confidence and a positive attitude about school to the child.

### Phasing in Young Children

Pioneer Montessori School provides a gradual orientation to the class for young children.

In Primary classrooms, new children and beginning three-year-olds may begin separately from returning four- and five-year-olds. By entering for short periods (usually one hour) in the morning over a five to ten-day period and expanding in increments to a full three-hour morning session, the children have uninterrupted attention in a smaller and more secure setting. Children are phased into the morning class as they are ready, while three-year-olds may be phased into the full class a few at a time, over several weeks, without any separate orientation. Regardless of the orientation approach, it is important to involve the older children in concrete ways of helping and welcoming the youngest.

Preprimary parents are discouraged from entering the classroom for early pick-up. Please notify the Administrative Office in order to schedule and prepare your child for early dismissal and wait outside and your child will be dismissed to you.

### Phasing in Older Children

The anxiety of newly enrolled older children is primarily related to social adjustment rather than separation from parents. Orientation for these children involves immediate active participation with their peer group.

### First Conference & Home Visit

First Conferences are held in November, but guides are available, by appointment, if a conference is desired outside of formal Parent Teacher Conference dates. Home visits for new students, prior to the first day of school, occur mid to late August depending on school start date.

### ***Non-Discrimination Statement***

PIONEER MONTESSORI SCHOOL, a Nonprofit Corporation, located at 211 2nd Avenue North, Ketchum, ID 83340, admits students of any race, color, religion, national ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment of faculty and administrative staff, scholarship and loan programs and other school-administered programs.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### *Classroom Observations*

The best way for parents to understand their child's school experience is to observe in the classroom. Parents not only learn what their child is doing; they also see Montessori principles in action. Parents, friends, grandfriends, are encouraged and welcome to observe any of our classroom environments. Parents of children who will be transitioning to the next environment will be asked to observe a class at that level prior to their child transitioning. When observing your child's class, please keep in mind, that your child will act differently when you are in the classroom.

How to observe in a Montessori classroom:

- Prior to observing, schedule a time that will work with the classroom's schedule by contacting the classroom guide or the Administrative Offices. Typically, mornings are the best time for observation during their morning work cycle.
- As a courtesy to the children as well as the guide, please plan on limiting your observation time to 30 minutes.
- The guide will designate a chair for you to quietly observe from.
- Most of the children in the class are accustomed to observers and will not really notice you. However, occasionally a younger or new child will talk to you. Please, respond kindly to his or her question but do not encourage or initiate conversation. Explain that you are here to watch the children while they do their work.
- Please do not walk around the classroom or examine the materials unless the children are gone.
- After your observation, please feel free to schedule a time to debrief with the classroom guide or the Head of School. Please respect that guides may be giving a lesson or assisting students and will not be able to engage in lengthy discussions during your observation period.
- **As you leave, we ask that you respect the privacy of the individual children in any subsequent conversation you may have about our school**

A few things to notice in a Montessori classroom:

- Each Montessori class has its own personality, but some things are the same for each of us. Look for:
  - Children at work
  - Children of different ages working together
  - Children solving problems on their own
  - Children between work
  - An orderly and interesting environment
- One of our goals is to foster independence. When an adult jumps in to provide solutions or help, children do not have the opportunity to develop their own abilities and problem solving skills.
  - Are the children given time to handle their own emotional and social problems?
  - Are they encouraged to do things for themselves?
- The role of the Montessori guide is not to entertain or mold a child, but to provide a place, guidance, and support for the growing and developing person. This includes insistence upon good behavior and appropriate quality of work.
  - Who is maintaining these standards?
  - Different children have different needs
  - Needs are social, emotional, physical and intellectual
  - They may be big and obvious or small and subtle
  - Each guide keeps careful records
  - Children choose their own work purposefully

### ***Parent Education Opportunities***

A number of meetings are planned each year to provide parents with specific information about child development, Montessori principles, and educational methods. Parents are encouraged to attend these events to gain a better understanding of their child's education and the Montessori philosophy.

Each school year we offer three Montessori Education Nights, five Open Parent Association (PA) Meetings, and three Morning About Meetings. Please see your current school calendar for specific dates.

#### Montessori Education Nights

Montessori Education Nights are designed to explore aspects of the curriculum, and to help parents understand not only what their child(ren) are doing, but also why. Opportunities for hands-on exploration of materials enliven not only the guide's presentation, but give key anecdotes to help parents connect material and methods to the specific behaviors and responses of their children. Prior to Montessori Education Nights, the specific Montessori topic will be announced via Friday Notes.

#### Parents Association Meetings

Open PA Meetings are an opportunity for parents to gather and discuss upcoming calendar events, to connect with the Head of School and the Board of Directors, and to discuss Montessori education and philosophy. The PA spearheads fundraising activities and is the driving factor behind fundraising events such as the Harvest Festival, Holiday Parties, Spring Fundraiser, End of the Year Celebration and more. Open PA Meetings are led by the Executive Committee of the Parents' Association who meet 5 times a year.

See also: *Parents' Association under Administration, Guidelines & Admissions and Administrative Structure*

#### Morning About Meetings

Morning About Meetings are informal gatherings with parents and the Head of School to discuss various parenting and education topics. Parents are encouraged to bring questions and be prepared to brainstorm strategies and support their fellow Montessori parents. Morning About Meetings begin with a certain topic (announced via Friday Notes) and the conversation explores any relevant or pressing parenting concerns or topics from there.

### ***Parent Teacher Conferences***

In the fall and spring there are special days set aside as Parent Teacher Conference days. School is not in session on these days. Prior to conferences, parents will be given the classroom guide's conference schedule and will be asked to sign up for a time slot that works for them during these days. Guides will contact parents who have not responded to notices/signed up. Guides may recommend that you observe your child's classroom prior to a conference.

Parent Teacher Conferences are held in November and April. Please see your current school calendar for specific dates. If you would like to schedule an additional meeting outside of conference days, please contact your child's guide to schedule a mutually available time.

There is no school on conference days, but it is still very important that you stay in town in order to talk with your child's guide. Please don't plan to be away during this time. If a parent fails to schedule a child's conference, documentation must be filed in the child's records. If the guide deems it necessary to schedule a conference with you, but is having difficulty doing so, the Head of School will be contacted for support.

### ***Fund Raising and Volunteering***

The Montessori program is based on the notion that families, working with the School, will provide

an environment designed for the optimal success for each child. Together, we engage in an ongoing dialogue centered on prioritizing the needs of the child.

Parent partnership goes beyond parent education. Parents cannot just be passive recipients of teaching by the school, but must evolve into active teachers and contributors in turn. We have developed a list of suggestions for family involvement to clearly identify specific ways families can support their child at different stages, as well as the unique needs and interest of individual families.

### Fund Raising

Every year, like all independently financed school, Pioneer Montessori School operates on a deficit and relies heavily on gifts of time, talent and financial support from current parents, past parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends. This critical and much valued support is realized through two major fundraising campaigns: Annual Giving and the Spring Fundraiser. Our goal is always 100% participation from parents, staff, faculty and board. Every gift counts and no gift is too small!

Additional information about giving to the Pioneer Montessori School:

- In addition to gifts of cash by check (please make checks payable to the Pioneer Montessori School), Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express credit cards, the School accept gifts of securities/stock, gifts in-kind, and participates in merchant campaigns.
- The Pioneer Montessori School is a 501(c)3 charitable institution, all donations are tax deductible.
- We ask for 100 percent participation from our families because it shows the support of our community and helps the school when soliciting outside funding.
- The School is committed to maintaining its academic excellence with highly-trained, dedicated and experienced faculty. We strive to provide an authentic Montessori learning environment to a diverse student body, regardless of each child's economic background. In order to ease the tuition burden on parents, we request the balance of needed funding in the form of a tax-deductible gift.
- Several companies have a matching program that matches gifts to independent schools. Contact your employer's Personnel department to learn whether they have a program in place and obtain the appropriate matching form.

### Annual Giving

Annual Giving is the single most important source of funds after tuition because it provides vital support of the operating budget. It bridges the annual operating gap between the cost of tuition and the actual cost of educating your child. Annual Gifts provide an immediate and direct benefit to each student and faculty member, as well as to the quality and range of all teaching and academic programming.

Annual Giving supports:

- Operating expenses - including building maintenance, insurance, administration, technology, safety, classroom supplies, and so much more.
- Affordable tuition and student scholarships – The fund keeps tuition affordable and within reach for all families, regardless of their financial capabilities.
- Faculty enrichment, teacher training, and competitive salaries to recruit and retain the highest caliber Montessori-trained staff and faculty.

### Spring Fundraiser

The Spring Fundraiser has two major objectives; to raise necessary operational dollars for Pioneer Montessori School and to serve as an opportunity for community celebration. Fundraising Chairs,

determined through the Parents Association, plan and organize an evening event for parents, friends, and grandfriends. The event includes a Live Auction, Silent Auction, Sign Ups, Paddle Up, games and entertainment. There is a corresponding Online Auction in the weeks prior to the Spring Fundraiser. All current parents are expected to participate in this event at some capacity. Please see your current school calendar for specific dates.

#### Harvest Festival

Every Fall, our school community gathers at the Sage School for a Saturday afternoon of harvest inspired activities. All families, friends, grandfriends are invited to join. Parents will be asked to contribute items to the Harvest Market, which will be sold to raise funds for Pioneer Montessori School. Room Parents will be asked to find parent volunteers for the event. We hope all families will join us for this fun community event! Please see your current school calendar for specific dates.

**EVERYTHING ELSE YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW:  
A TO Z**

### ***Air Quality***

During times of poor air quality, such as during a wild fire, the school will monitor Ketchum's Air Quality Index to determine whether or not it is safe for our students to continue outdoor activities. Pioneer Montessori School follows the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's recommendations for schools. Please be sure to notify your child's classroom guide if they are especially sensitive to poor air quality.

### ***All Day Montessori***

Pioneer Montessori School's All Day Montessori program was developed by the growing need from parents who required care after school dismissal. All Day Montessori is available for students in PrePrimary and Primary. Please contact the Administrative Office for more information or if you are interested in All Day Montessori for your child.

### ***Allergies***

Allergies and intolerance to food, medication, or any other substance, and actions to be taken in an emergency situation are required to be documented by the child's physician. Said documentation is then filed in the school records. Parents are also advised to discuss their child's allergies with the classroom guide.

See also: *Severe Allergen Policy*

### ***Alumni Visits***

Please keep in mind that any visitor, although very welcome, is a classroom distraction and requires teacher attention. Please arrange all visits through the Administrative Office prior to your arrival, if possible.

### ***Applying to Other Schools***

Pioneer Montessori School will release student's records *only* after present year tuition and fees have been paid in full and a written records request form has been received from either the new school or the child's parent(s). If your family chooses to leave Pioneer Montessori School prior to the 6th grade year, a letter of withdrawal must be submitted to the Head of School prior to the May 1<sup>st</sup> re-enrollment date.

### ***Arrival & Dismissal***

Adherence to the arrival and dismissal times is essential. Being late is disruptive to both the child and the class. All students need to arrive between 8:00 and 8:15, or as noted. All classroom doors are locked at 8:30 am. If you are late bringing your child to school, please check in with the Administrative Offices so that your child's teacher can be notified to greet you at the door and let you into the classroom. Parents of Primary and Elementary students should say goodbye in the cubby area outside of the classroom and allow the child to hang-up his or her coat and put on their slippers independently. To prevent disruptions, parents are not allowed to enter the classroom without the prearranged permission of the classroom guide.

- At arrival please sign in your child and confirm who will be picking up and when.
- At dismissal please sign your child out.

If you do not indicate an alternate pick up on the sign in form, please call the Administrative Offices to notify us of your change in plans. No child will be dismissed to someone other than a parent without parental permission.

See also: *Release of Children Authorization*

### ***Attendance***

Regular attendance for all students is ideal in accomplishing our communal goals. Consistency adheres to a child's need for order and reduces incidences of drop off anxiety and inappropriate

classroom behavior. While the school acknowledges that there may be cases of special family events that might preclude attendance, we encourage you to make school routine and attempt to schedule family holidays around the school calendar.

Inconsistent attendance at all levels is problematic because of community and academic expectations. If a student will miss a significant period of time at school, it is important for parents to communicate with teachers ahead of time in order to make arrangements.

When planning family vacations, look carefully at the school calendar. While we understand that vacations involve planning around many different schedules, please keep in mind that Parent Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. There is no school on Conference days, but it is still very important that you stay in-town in order to talk with your child's classroom guide. Please don't plan to be away during this time. Please see your current school calendar for specific dates.

#### Absence or Tardiness

In all cases of absence or tardiness, parents are asked to call the Administrative Office to notify the school of the child's absence. The time and information of these calls will be noted and passed on to the appropriate classroom. All classroom doors are locked at 8:30 am. If you are late bringing your child to school, please check in with the Administrative Offices so that your child's teacher can be notified to greet you at the door and let you into the classroom. Late arrivals are strongly discouraged as they are an interruption to the morning work cycle.

#### Excessive Absenteeism and Tardiness

Excessively irregular attendance and excessive tardiness can have a detrimental effect on the individual child involved and the classroom environment. If the classroom guide and the Head of School determine that a child's absences or tardiness are having such an effect on the class, the parents will be counseled regarding the appropriateness of enrollment at Pioneer Montessori School.

See also: *Attendance* under *Administration, Guidelines & Admissions*

#### ***Birthdays***

Since each classroom has a different procedure for celebrating birthdays, please check with the classroom guide prior to making arrangements. When planning birthday parties and other exciting events, please make arrangements for invitations, picking up children, and distributing gifts to take place outside the school so as not to cause hurt feeling by being left out of these special events.

#### ***Cell Phone Use***

In an attempt to preserve our campus and to create a child centered environment, we ask that you refrain from cell phone use while on the Pioneer Montessori School campus (especially at pick up and drop off times). Students are so excited to see parents at the end of the day! Enjoy the moment and respect their space. Older students who may need to utilize a cell phone to coordinate after school activities, must keep cell phones turned off and in their cubbies at all times during the day. Please do not text or call staff cell phones during the day as they are asked to adhere to the no cell phone policy as well.

See also: *Phone Calls & Messages*

#### ***Child Abuse***

Employees of Pioneer Montessori School who are acting in their official or professional capacity, and become aware, or suspect, that a student has suffered, or faces a threat of suffering, any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child, shall immediately notify the Blaine County Department of Human Services and the Ketchum Police Department.

The Head of School, not the classroom guide, will file the report with the appropriate agency, based on local regulations. The report will include dates and times, description of the injury in detail, drastic changes in health and behavior, direct quotations from the child indicating abuse, name and address of individual suspected, name and duties of individual making the report.

### ***Child Custody***

In cases of separation or divorce where one parent or guardian has custody of the child(ren), Pioneer Montessori School sometimes receives special requests or instructions regarding the child(ren). In order to clarify the legal regulations and to prevent any misunderstanding, the following information is offered. While most parents are aware of the appropriate rules and regulation in this matter, it has been our experience that some parents have not been informed as to the rights of non-custodial parents.

According to Public Law 93-380 and the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA): “In the case of divorce or separation, a school district must provide equal access to both natural parents, custodial and non-custodial, unless there is a legal binding document that specifically removes that parent’s FERPA rights.”

In this context, a legally binding document is a certified court order or other legal paper that prohibits access to education records, or removes the parent’s right to have knowledge about his or her child’s records. A certified court order would also be required if restrictions were placed on when and where a parent might contact or visit the child at school.

This information is provided because parents often give special information regarding their child’s custody which Pioneer Montessori School cannot utilize legally. A handwritten note, a telephone call or comments on the registration card are not in accordance with the law. The school must have a copy of a certified court order noting any restrictions. These are kept in the student’s folder. Should you have any further questions, please contact the office at your convenience. Any legal action or information regarding court orders may require the assistance of your attorney or the courts.

If there are any court restrictions on custody rights granted or denied one of a child’s parents, this information needs to be on file at school, and addressed when the enrollment application is signed. Appropriate legal paperwork must be on file when the custodial parent requests Pioneer Montessori School not to release the child to the other parent. Children will be released to either natural parent unless a court document assigning custody is provided. The custodial parent may ask to be informed when the noncustodial parent makes requests.

When a parent teacher conference is scheduled, we strongly advise conducting only one conference for the same child. It is advantageous to the student to have all caregivers (parents/guardians/teachers) working together as a unified team. However, in some circumstances, two separate conferences may be requested if needed. If you have any questions, contact the school office.

### ***Class Placement & Eligibility***

Determination of eligibility for school programs and assignment of students to individual classes is the responsibility of the administration and faculty. Factors such as balancing classes by ages, gender and needs of the children are considered. Requests for specific guides and/or classrooms is discouraged.

### ***Clothing***

All articles of clothing and personal property should be marked with your child’s name. Please avoid sending your child to school with anything expensive, hard to replace, or extremely sentimental. Simple, loose, easy to manage, safe clothing is recommended for the younger children. The children should be free from worry about keeping their clothes clean, especially when much of their work is

done on the floor, and painting and artwork are a part of your child's school day. Please avoid suspenders, belts, overalls, etc. so that your child has the best chance for success with his or her personal care. Play clothes are fine.

### Costumes

Costumes at school are strongly discouraged unless otherwise announced as a full classroom activity. Like toys, costumes often cause unnecessary distraction to both the student wearing the costume and to his or her fellow classmates.

See also: *Sharing/Toys*

### Two-Shoe System

Students in every environment and of all ages are requested to have a pair of indoor shoes to be kept at school. This will reduce the mud and pebbles tracked into the school, and save you from sending an extra pair of shoes when your child wears boots to school. We recommend non-skid "rubber" soled slippers that fit the entire foot (non flip-flops).

### Diapers

If your child wears diapers to school, you are responsible for providing a convenience pack of diapers and a box of wipes to keep at school. Consult with your child's classroom guide to find out his or her system for replenishing the supply of diapers. Students must be toilet trained prior to entering the Primary environment. If parents need any help or advice in regards to toilet training, we are always available to discuss strategy!

### ***Collection Policies***

Pioneer Montessori School hereby adopts the following policies for the collection of late accounts. A student's account includes but is not limited to tuition, All Day Montessori payments, Activity Fees, Service Fees, and Summer Camps.

#### Level One:

If a student's account is 60 days past due Pioneer Montessori School reserves the right to:

- Require that the family provide a written payment plan, including amounts and date, and signed by the responsible parent(s)/guardian(s)

#### Level Two:

If past due payment is not received, or the terms of a payment plan are not met, Pioneer Montessori School reserves the right to:

- Withhold progress reports or transcripts
- Require that the student's tuition account be paid in advance in subsequent years.
- Require that the same terms be applied to any other students in the same family

#### Level Three:

If Level One and Level Two collection procedures are not successful, Pioneer Montessori School reserves the right to:

- Dismiss the student from the school
- Withhold progress reports or transcripts
- Pursue legal means to collect the outstanding debt

### Returned Checks

Any checks written to Pioneer Montessori School and returned for non-payment are subject to a thirty five dollar (\$35) processing fee, plus any additional return fee charged by Pioneer Montessori School bank.

### ***Community Service***

In keeping with the Montessori educational objective and method of character formation, Pioneer Montessori School recognizes that the classroom guides, in cooperation with the Head of School, engage children in certain learning activities in the school that may at times extend into the greater community beyond the school. These activities are always designed to be developmentally appropriate, politically non-partisan and undertaken without discrimination on the basis on nationality, religion, ethnicity and race, and to give further concrete experience in responsibly helping others and in becoming aware of and contributing to the needs of their community.

### ***Contact Information & Correspondence***

All financial information, invoices, statements, and other school business correspondence are sent through Email and the U.S. postal service.

Please be sure to update the school with any changes to your current mailing/billing address and contact information (i.e., email address, home/mobile phone numbers, etc.). Changes and updates can be relayed in person to the Administrative Office or via email at [administration@pioneermontessorischool.org](mailto:administration@pioneermontessorischool.org).

In addition, each class may post information, or sign up sheets, specific to the various classrooms. These sign up sheets are generally located by the entrance to your child's coatroom.

### ***Discipline Policy***

See: *Discipline Policy and Code of Conduct under Parent Involvement & Guidelines*

### ***Donations of Merchandise***

Pioneer Montessori School welcomes donations of merchandise and will provide a letter of acknowledgment that can be used for tax purposes. If you have an article you wish to donate, please call/email the Administrative Office at (208)726-9060 [administration@pioneermontessorischool.org](mailto:administration@pioneermontessorischool.org).

### ***Drug Abuse***

Behaviors regarding controlled substance abuse by a student, a member of Pioneer Montessori School staff, or a parent or other persons authorized by a parent to appear on his or her behalf, shall result in exclusion of that person from Pioneer Montessori School lands, buildings, and grounds.

### ***Emergencies, Illness, and Accidents***

All parents must give the school the names and phone numbers of three people to contact in the case of an emergency. Every attempt will be made to reach a child's parents/guardians first, and then the back-up list will be used. It is important that these people agree to be listed and are available to come to school in an emergency or when the child is ill and the parents are unavailable.

See also: *Injuries and Health & Wellness Policy*

### ***Emergency Safety Plans***

Every effort is made at Pioneer Montessori School to see that all are provided with as safe an environment as possible. The children are instructed in and practice the procedure for evacuating the building safely and expediently. Faculty and Staff are prepared in cases of lock out or lock down and every effort will be made to notify parents if these procedures become necessary.

### ***Field Trips***

Field trips are an important enrichment opportunity for students. A Field Trip/Activities Permission Form obtaining parental consent for children to go on field trips is sent home prior to enrollment. This form must be signed by parents and returned to school. Announcements concerning the details of the individual trips will be sent home prior to the trip and will be posted in Friday Notes. Children not

permitted to attend field trips may be kept at home, or may visit another class with the guide's prior approval.

Parents are frequently asked to assist in chaperoning for class field trips. Parent volunteers are used for transporting children for some trips. Parents interested in being occasional field trip drivers must be safe and responsible drivers, have working seat belts, a valid driver's license, and proof of insurance. Pioneer Montessori School insurance does not provide coverage. Please check your coverage and/or discuss this with your insurance agent.

Students driven in a private vehicle on a field trip may not sit in the front seat of the car.

The cost of field trips is usually included in tuition. However, you may be asked to send in money to cover a specific field trip.

### ***Financial Aid & Scholarships***

Financial Aid applications can be accessed online starting in January for the following school year. The application deadline is April 15<sup>th</sup>. The Finance Committee meets in April and awards are given in May. Please see *Friday Notes* for specific due dates and the link to access the online application. Questions regarding the Financial Aid application process can be directed to the Business Manager.

The Finance Committee makes decisions to award financial assistance and financial aid on a case-by-case basis, to the extent that funds are available.

### ***Forms***

Before any new or returning student's first day of school, the Administrative Offices must have a current Emergency Contact form, Release of Authorization form, a signed Assumption of Risk, Release and Indemnity form, Health History & Release form, Field Trip Permission form, Model Release, and current Immunization Records or signed Exemption form. List on the Health History form any food or other allergies your child may have, as well as dietary restrictions, chronic physical problems and pertinent developmental information. Some children may be exempt from required immunizations for medical, religious, or philosophical reasons. Please contact Pioneer Montessori School if you have not received this form.

It is a Department of Social Services requirement that we have two emergency contacts on file, and that parents list the names of any additional programs or schools that students are concurrently attending, and the grade or class level.

**Note: It is imperative that we have current telephone numbers on file at all times. Immediately inform the school office of any changes in work, home, or cell phone numbers for yourself or your emergency contacts.**

### ***Food***

Montessori is unique in its educational philosophy in that the environment we prepare for our children seeks to nurture their developing bodies as well as their developing minds and spirits. Providing food for your child and his or her classmates is an opportunity to educate and model the importance of healthful eating habits. Keeping this philosophy in mind, parents should ensure that their food offerings are nutritious. Sugar should be limited and no candy or soda. Send fruit and vegetables for your child to eat. Continued exposure and expectation will help develop a healthy habit of eating these foods.

See also: *Severe Allergen Policy* and *Birthday Celebrations*

### Lunches

Students bring their own lunches and water bottles, from home. Parents are encouraged to pack nutritious foods for their children. Since cooking is not permitted at lunchtime, lunch boxes should contain food that the children can eat at room temperature. Soup or hot beverages should be sent pre-mixed in a thermos, with a spoon, if necessary. Likewise, refrigeration is not available for lunches brought from home, so parents should pack foods that will not spoil in the three hours before lunchtime or include a frozen ice pack in the lunch box.

In an attempt to present to the children the importance of environmental awareness, we have an active recycling program. With this in mind, we ask that you help your child, when preparing his or her snack or lunch, to become aware of the importance of limiting the amount of waste in packaging. We encourage your child to use a thermos for his or her drink, reusable plastic containers for his or her food, and bags. All items from home are to be labeled with their owner's name.

Ask your child to bring home any uneaten food to help you better judge the content and quantity of the lunches he or she enjoys. Remember that your child is capable of assisting you in the preparation of his or her lunch and should be encouraged to do so whenever possible.

### Snacks

All students will have the opportunity for a daily snack. Students in Elementary should pack a healthy snack from home in their lunch boxes. Students in PrePrimary and Primary will help prepare snacks for the classroom as part of their morning work cycle. Parents of students in PrePrimary and Primary will be asked to take turns grocery shopping for the classroom. Snacks consist of fruits, vegetables, cheese, or other non-sugary foods.

### ***Friday Notes***

Friday Notes are sent out weekly (on Friday afternoon) to remind you of special events for the upcoming week, announcements of various school activities, reminders of scheduled events, notices and articles by guides and assistants, school closure reminders, and/or news about Pioneer Montessori School in general.

It is important that we have your current email address, as this is our platform to communicate date/schedule changes with parents quickly, if needed.

### ***Gifts***

Speak with your child's classroom guide if you wish to give something that the entire class may enjoy. Gifts or monetary donations given to the Pioneer Montessori School are tax deductible. Your monetary gift may be designated for a special use, or its use may be unspecified. For more information, contact the Head of School.

See also: *Fund Raising, Annual Giving, Spring Fundraiser, and Harvest Festival* under *Parent Involvement & Guidelines*

### ***Harassment Policy***

It is the policy of Pioneer Montessori School that all employees are entitled to a harassment-free work environment and will have management support in reporting any type of harassment or related inappropriate behavior they might encounter. This policy applies to employees, students, parents, vendors, volunteers or guests at the school location or wherever Pioneer Montessori School students are present in accordance with the official school schedule.

### Harassment

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or group's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive

work environment. The basis for harassment includes, but is not limited to age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment includes any unwanted or unwelcome attention or action of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment; or submission to or rejection of such conduct by the recipient is used as the basis of employment decisions affecting the recipient; or the conduct unreasonably interferes with an employee's job performance; or the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment is prohibited whether it is committed by supervisors/administrators, co-workers or non-employees. Sexually harassing conduct might include, among other things, use of sexual comments or jokes; sexual remarks about a person's body, clothing or sexual activities; patting, pinching or other offensive touching; displays of sexually suggestive pictures or objects; or unwelcome sexual advances or passes. The intent of the harasser is not the determining factor; what counts is the perception of the recipient of the behavior. Employees who have any questions about what constitutes sexual harassment should go to their Head of School for clarification.

### Inappropriate Behavior

Additionally, even though a person's behavior might not be covered by the above definitions, it nevertheless might not be professional or consistent with a good working environment. A person whose conduct is inappropriate will receive an explanation of the inappropriateness of the behavior. If the inappropriate behavior continues, or if a specific incident is severe, disciplinary action will be taken.

### Reporting Harassment

Pioneer Montessori School's Harassment Policy assures employees and visitors to campus, support in reporting any type of harassment or related inappropriate behavior. Employees or visitors experiencing or witnessing any type of harassment or inappropriate behavior should use the following procedures:

Deal with it immediately, advising the person that the behavior is inappropriate and must stop.

If an employee or visitor prefers not to discuss the matter with the offender, or the offender fails to respect a request, report the incident to the Head of School. Reporting to a co-worker is not sufficient. Employees who have information about violations of this Harassment Policy but do not provide this information to Pioneer Montessori School or do not cooperate in any investigation are subject to disciplinary action.

**Pioneer Montessori School will promptly investigate all reported incidents and take any appropriate corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Information will be revealed only on a need-to-know basis. Pioneer Montessori School will not condone retaliation against any employee who reports possible harassment or inappropriate behavior or who assists with an investigation.**

### ***Head Lice***

We strongly encourage parents to be proactive, contact the office (or their child's physician) if they have any questions or concerns, or if they have found lice (or nits) on their child. In an effort to keep our parents accurately well informed about lice at school, we will only report on confirmed cases (i.e., parent-child reports). Please remember to be sensitive to other families and children during times of outbreak and remember that lice will come around again, as it always does. Please be proactive in your home remedies and weekly/monthly "comb through" checks as well.

In an effort to prevent head lice from spreading once it is found, we ask that parents treat and comb out any live lice/nits prior to returning to school. Teachers or faculty will check a student's head during school hours if lice are suspected. If lice or nits are found during school hours, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up the student at their earliest convenience in order for the lice to be treated.

If nits/lice are found, please do the following:

- 1) **Contact the office:** Only parents/guardians will provide official conformation.
- 2) **Treat:** However you choose, please contact the office or you child's physician if you need suggestions/tips.
- 3) **Comb:** You can continue to comb out the nits after the hair has been treated. This may help prevent your child from being misdiagnosed with an active case of head lice. And it will help ensure eggs not killed at first are removed.
- 4) **Re-check:** If nits/lice are not found after that time, please allow your child(ren) to return to school or other school activities.

AS A REMINDER, and as outlined by the *American Academy of Pediatrics*, head lice are **not a health hazard or a sign of poor hygiene** and, in contrast to body lice, are not responsible for the spread of any disease. You do not need to throw away any items belonging to your child, but you may want to wash your child's clothes, towels, hats, and bed linens in hot water and dry on high heat. Lice can survive for up to 24 hours without a host and nits (eggs) can take 7-10 days to hatch. Because head lice are usually transmitted by head-to-head contact, parents should carefully check a child's head before and after attending a sleepover or camp where children share sleeping quarters. If your child has head lice, work quickly to treat your child to prevent the head lice from spreading.

### ***Health & Wellness Policy***

If you notice a change in your child's behavior, such as feeling tired or out-of-sorts, consider this a sign of the onset of illness, which is the most contagious time. Keep your child home for some extra rest if s/he is overly tired or irritable.

**Children with communicable diseases (including serious colds, sore throats, persistent cough, rash, conjunctivitis and the like), who have vomited, had diarrhea, a fever over 100 degrees in the 24 hours preceding the school day must be kept at home. If your child has had a throat culture, please keep him or her at home until the results have been reported to you. Please do not send your child to school if they require medication to reduce or mask symptoms (such as Tylenol to lower a fever). This can put other students and faculty at risk for contracting an illness and students are often sent home feeling worse when the medication wears off, symptoms return, and they have not been given the opportunity for adequate rest. A child who is prescribed an antibiotic must be on the medication for 24 hours before returning to school.**

Children with a discolored discharge from their nose should be kept at home until it stops. As you can imagine, children this age cannot be expected to handle a runny nose in a hygienic manner.

Please call and notify the Administrative Office if your child won't be coming to school (208)726-9060. If they are sick with something contagious, like strep throat or conjunctivitis, it is imperative that you call the Administrative Office as soon as possible, so that everyone who might have been exposed can be alerted.

In the event that your child becomes ill during the school hours, you will be notified. Parents must arrange for their child to be picked up as quickly as possible. The faculty will determine if a child is too sick to stay at school and should be picked up.

### ***HIV/AIDS Policy***

Pioneer Montessori School will not discriminate against HIV positive students or employees. Persons involved in the education of students with HIV/AIDS will respect the family's right to privacy.

### ***Holiday Celebrations***

Pioneer Montessori School's approach to holidays is to provide cultural enrichment for all the children. Our goal is to use the festivals that we celebrate to build a sense of community within the classroom and to introduce the child to the different cultures of the human family. Guides frequently ask parents to participate in the planning of celebrations in the classroom.

### ***Injuries***

If any injury occurs during school, the classroom guide will document the incident which will be made available to parents. A serious accident will, of course, be reported to you immediately.

Pioneer Montessori School has adopted the following procedures in caring for your child when he/she becomes injured at school. In case of emergency and need of medical or hospital care:

1. If necessary, the school will call an ambulance to transport the child to a local medical facility.
2. The school will call the home, and/or the parent(s)/guardian(s) place of employment and/or cell phones. If there is no answer,
3. The school will call the individuals listed as emergency contacts by the child's parents.
4. If emergency contacts do not answer, a determination will be made as to whether the child should be transported to a local medical facility, accompanied by a staff member.
5. The school will continue to call the parents/guardians and emergency contacts until one is reached.

Parents may list additional instructions or changes to the above procedure on the child's individual emergency information record.

Parents/guardians are responsible for having on file at the school and keeping up-to-date, a list of their daytime phone numbers and phone numbers and addresses of at least two other designated people to call in an emergency if the parents cannot be reached.

See also: *Emergencies, Illness, and Accidents*

### ***Job Openings***

Parents of Pioneer Montessori School students may apply for job openings in the school, except for positions in the class in which they have a child enrolled. Parent applicants will be considered along with any other applicants and will be afforded no preference in the hiring process.

### ***Lost & Found***

Lost and found boxes are maintained in each entry. Check it if you discover your child is missing a mitten, sweater, or sock. Likewise, turn in any items you may find that don't belong to your child. Be sure to label all items brought to school with the student's first and last names to ensure missing property can be returned more easily to its owner. All unclaimed items will be donated after a period of time.

### ***Medication at School***

We discourage the administration of medication during school hours. We request that, whenever possible, medication doses be scheduled during non-school hours. We realize that this may not always be possible or practical.

In the event that your child needs to have a medication administered at school we ask that you adhere to the following requirements:

### Over the Counter Medications

Medical Authorization forms, obtained from the Administrative Office, must be given to the school before a staff member may administer any medication, whether prescription or over the counter. The Medication Authorization form includes:

- The name of the medication
- Dosage to be given (if different than dosage instructions on the packaging)
- Time of administration
- Duration of treatment
- Sequence, if more than one medication is to be taken
- Proper storage, i.e. refrigeration or shelf
- Any special instructions or concerns
- Signature of parent

Over the counter medication must be in the original container labeled by the parent with the child's name. The child must have had the first dose of medication at home. The parent is responsible for submitting a new form to the school each time there is a change in the dosage or in the time the medication is to be taken. In urgent circumstances, authorization may be given over the phone.

### Prescription Medication

1. A Medication Authorization form must be filled out as indicated above and signed by the prescribing physician.
2. A signed letter from the doctor may be submitted in lieu of our Authorization for Medication form as long as it contains all the information required.
3. A prescription medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label affixed containing the child's name, the name of medication, the dosage amount, and the time to be administered. For short term medications, such as a 10-day antibiotic, it is helpful if the pharmacist can give you a second, labeled container so that the doses of the medication needed at school can remain in the Administration Office.
4. Send the proper device to administer the medication.

All medications will be safely stored in the Administrative Offices and administered at the appropriate time. It is beneficial that you speak to the classroom guide about the medication in general. Within one week after the expiration of the effective date on the physician order, the parent must personally collect any unused portion of the medication. Medications not claimed within that period will be destroyed.

**Children may not have any medication (including over the counter items such as Tylenol or vitamins) with them in the classroom, in their lunch boxes, or backpacks.**

If any of the above requirements are not complete or written directions are unclear concerning the administration of the medication, the staff will not administer the medicine. We will attempt to contact you in this event.

Parent volunteers and employees shall not store medications, cosmetics or other hazardous substances in areas, pockets or purses that are accessible to children.

See also: *Sunscreen Policy*

### ***Outdoor Time***

We believe that outdoor play is an essential part of our program for all children. The children need this unstructured time to stretch, exercise their large muscles, and socialize with each other. During the winter, it is especially important to balance the indoor air environment with fresh outdoor air. Except in severe weather conditions, students are generally encouraged to play outside. Be sure your

child brings appropriate seasonal clothing. Generally, if your child is too sick to go outside, he or she should be kept home. If your child should be kept indoors for an extended period of time, please discuss the matter with your child's classroom guide.

See also: *Playground Rules*

### ***Parent Education***

Parent education includes, but is not limited to; observations, Montessori Education Nights, Morning About Meetings, and Parents Association Meetings.

See also: *Parent Education Opportunities* under *Parent Involvement*

### ***Parent Teacher Conferences***

Conferences concerning your child's progress are scheduled twice a year for all students. Please see your current school calendar for specific dates.

See also: *Parent Teacher Conferences* under *Parent Involvement*

### ***Parking & Traffic Guidelines***

PrePrimary and Elementary children will enter through their doors on the Second Avenue side (the east side) of the building. The Primary classes will enter their classes through their door on the Second Street (south) side of the building. At dismissal, the staff will assist the students with their coats and bags and will have your child ready to facilitate departure at the appropriate time. Parents, please remember to sign-out your child once s/he is picked up.

We ask that parents abide by all traffic laws during pick-up and drop-off times. Including limiting parking to designated parking spaces.

### ***Phone Calls & Messages***

Calls for the faculty (guides and/or assistants) should be made before 8:00am or after 2:45pm. Guides and assistants are not free to speak to parents during class time and call transfers from the office are often disruptive to classroom activities. Messages for children, spouses, and other parents will be taken in emergencies only and must be done through the Administrative Office. Students should not call home during the day, unless prior permission has been granted. In cases of emergency, the classroom guide and/or administration will contact the parent(s).

See also: *Cell Phone Use*

### ***Pick-Up & Drop-Off***

All classroom doors are locked at 8:30 am. If you are late bringing your child to school, please check in with the Administrative Offices so that your child's teacher can be notified to greet you at the door and let you into the classroom. Late arrivals are strongly discouraged as they are an interruption to the morning work cycle. If you get stuck somewhere and can't pick-up your child on time, please arrange for another parent to pick him/her up. If you aren't able to arrange this, please contact the Administrative Office (208)726-9060 and your child will either stay with his or her guide, assistant or in the Administrative Office.

See also: *Release of Children Authorization*, *Parking & Traffic Guidelines* and *Playground Rules*

### ***Playground Rules***

Pioneer Montessori School has general ground rules that pertain to all of our environments including the classroom and playground. These rules are discussed with the entire class at a level that each child can understand. Children are encouraged to supplement additional rules. These rules are to be

followed at all times on the Pioneer Montessori School campus. If parents choose to utilize the playground before or after school, they are responsible for abiding by and reinforcing these rules. Our fundamental ground rules include:

- We treat ourselves, each other and the environment with care and respect.
- We resolve our problems through talking, listening and understanding.

Specific guidelines for lunchtime include maintaining quiet, using best manners and participating in lunch set-up and clean-up activities. Additional rules for the playground highlight safety for all children, care of the natural environment, and sharing. Guides will discuss the consequences of breaking a ground rule with the children. Such consequences may include reminding the child about the rules, removal from the activity, redirection of energy, and the possibility of losing the opportunity for some activities, or becoming responsible for replacing damaged items.

We encourage all parents to periodically discuss these suggested behaviors with their children as reinforcement.

### ***Probation & Termination Policy***

It is Pioneer Montessori School's desire that each child's school experience be a positive one, and for the parents to feel comfortable with the philosophy of the School. If the School determines that either the child is not benefiting from the program, the child or the parents are not adhering to the School policies and procedures, or otherwise are seriously interfering with Pioneer Montessori School accomplishment of its educational purposes, the Head of School will inform the parents that the problem exists and together, with the parents, will attempt to develop a plan to correct the problem. If the Head of School determines that the problem has not been corrected, s/he reserves the right to require the family to withdraw from the School. In most cases parents will be given at least two (2) weeks notice when required to withdraw their child from the Pioneer Montessori School. However, the Pioneer Montessori School, at its discretion, reserves the right to request the withdrawal of the child without notice.

### ***Problem Solving Procedures***

See: *Parent-Staff Communication/Resolution Procedures under Administration, Guidelines & Admissions*

### ***Recycling***

All classrooms at Pioneer Montessori School participate in recycling.

### ***Release of Children Authorization***

Children will be released only to their parents/guardians or other authorized adults as indicated on the child's emergency contact information record, or on the space indicated on the daily sign-in sheet. In the instance of a child going home with another child notes are required on the sign in/sign out sheets. Such plans must be made at a time other than during school hours. If your plans change during the day, or if you forget to indicate these plans on the sign-in sheet, please call the Administrative Office (208)726-9060.

### ***Room Parents***

Each year one or two volunteers from each classroom will be appointed Room Parents (RP). The RP helps to coordinate classroom activities, volunteer opportunities and other classroom management in conjunction with the classroom guide.

### ***Scholarships***

See *Financial Aid and Scholarships*

### ***School Closure***

Pioneer Montessori School typically follows the Blaine County School District in closing due to inclement weather. An email and text message will be sent to parents to announce a closure. In the event Pioneer Montessori School deviates from Blaine County's decision, the Head of School will begin proper notification.

### ***School Directory***

At the beginning of each school year, each household will be given a school directory which contains the current contact information of parents, guardians and staff. We ask you to please respect the privacy of our families and school community. The information within the school directory is provided for the use of Pioneer Montessori School community members and is intended for school related business only.

### ***Severe Allergen Policy***

When a student with a severe allergy enters our school community, the Pioneer Montessori School will do everything possible to accommodate this student and adapt our environments for their safety. In some situations, we may request that our families avoid bringing allergens, such as nuts, onto our campus. Families will be notified prior to the start of school if we are adopting any restrictions. They will then be periodically reminded throughout the school year of these restrictions.

Faculty and Staff will try our best to educate students and monitor food or items entering the classrooms to the best of our abilities. When these policies are adopted, we ask our parents to practice care when packing students' lunches and snacks. If a student accidentally arrives at school with any item containing an allergen, it will be disposed of or sent home immediately. If necessary, parents will be contacted to provide an additional/replacement food for their child. Parents and families of children with severe allergies should be aware that while we at Pioneer Montessori School try our best to maintain a safe environment for all of our students, we cannot be held liable for accidental allergen exposure.

### ***Sharing & Toys***

We welcome the children to share any interesting objects, hobbies, books, or experiences with the other children. However, toys should not be brought from home. Your child's guide will provide guidance for appropriate show and tell items and days for sharing.

### ***Social Media Policy***

The Pioneer Montessori School utilizes Social Media as a marketing tool with the intent to reach a broader audience than our immediate school community.

#### **Pioneer Montessori School's Facebook Page**

In order to maximize our online presence, all Facebook privacy settings are set to "Public." Our aim is to reach a broad audience with information that fits into the following topics:

- General School Information, including but not limited to:
  - Contact Information, Mission Statement, Programs, School History
- School Events, including but not limited to:
  - Harvest Festival, Pie Drive, Thanksgiving Celebrations, Spring Fundraiser and Online Auction, Winter Celebration, All School Ski Day, End of School Picnic
- Parent Education, including but not limited to:
  - Montessori Education Nights, Morning About Meetings, Parents' Association
  - Montessori Theory, Materials and Lessons
  - Links to outside articles and books in line with the Montessori philosophy
- School Fundraising, including but not limited to:
  - Annual Giving, Spring Fundraiser and Online Auction

Privacy: In an effort to respect the privacy of our students, the Pioneer Montessori School's Facebook page will adhere to the following guidelines, and in turn, expects all of those in our school community to do the same:

- Any student photo included on the school's Facebook page must have parental consent through a signed photo release.
  - All photo release forms will be kept on file in the Administrative Offices in compliance with the school's record retention policy. See also: *Student Records*
  - Parents/guardians have the right to update their current signed photo release forms at any time. The updated photo release form will take effect as of the signature date.
  - Parents/guardians may specify on their child(ren)'s photo release form to exclude them from appearing on the Pioneer Montessori School's Facebook page (or any social media platform).
- No student name (first or last) shall appear on any photo or article.
- No student photo will be linked to any other Facebook profile page (for example, no parents will be tagged in any photo of their child(ren)).
  - Facebook Privacy Settings will be set to allow the Administration to review any tags before they appear on Facebook. This will enable to Administration the ability to prevent any outside person from linking a child's name to a photo or post.
- Any comments appearing on a Pioneer Montessori School post or photo that does not adhere to the guidelines stated above, will be deleted immediately.

### ***Student Internet Use Policy***

Students in the Upper Elementary classroom have access to the Internet for school and educational purposes only. Prior to using any school computer, students are educated in their proper usage and must agree to use them accordingly. Students are responsible for complying to these restrictions. If they fail to do so, students may lose computer privileges or face additional school disciplinary action. Students in Lower Elementary may only use computers with the help of the classroom guide or assistant.

### ***Student Records***

Pioneer Montessori School stresses the importance of protecting the rights and privacy of children, their families, and our faculty. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic policy of our school.

This practice is in accord with one of the primary ethical principles of professional behavior in early childhood settings. For this reason, no parent volunteer working in the office is ever permitted access to any records pertaining to a child(ren) other than the child(ren) of that volunteer.

Parents/guardians have the right to inspect and review any and all records, files and data directly related to their children. Parents/guardians who desire to review these records are requested to call the Head of School to schedule an appointment to do so. A staff member must be present whenever records are reviewed.

Student records may consist of, but are not limited to, attendance records, health and emergency information, assessments, developmental and academic progress reports, accident reports, and parental authorization for various school activities.

### **Maintenance of Records of Previously Enrolled Children**

Records of a child who has been previously enrolled at Pioneer Montessori School will be kept on site for two years and thereafter stored electronically. Upon receipt of a parent/guardian's written request for these records, copies may be released to the administrator of the school where the child is (or will be) enrolled.

No information about students will be given to any person unless a written request from a parent, a guardian, or an authorized agency has been received.

Parents/guardians shall be allowed access to their own children's academic files in accordance with Idaho State Education Law.

See also: *Child Custody*

### ***Sunscreen Policy***

Outdoor play is an essential part of our program for all children. We expect all parents to provide their child(ren) with the tools to do so safely, including proper protection from the sun. We encourage parents to do the following:

- Apply sunscreen in the morning before sending students to school.
- Provide students with sunscreen (clearly labeled with their name) to keep in their cubby. Due to the risk of allergic reaction, the school cannot provide students with sunscreen. Guides and assistants will help remind students to reapply before heading outside.
- Provide students with a wide brim hat and long sleeves to wear outside.
- Students 5 and younger who need help applying sunscreen, please provide written consent, along with clearly labeled sunscreen, so the guides and assistants can help them to apply it.
- Sunscreen sticks are also great for students

### ***Transportation***

Parents are responsible for arranging their child's transportation to and from school. The roster of Pioneer Montessori School families and their addresses is very useful in assisting you in arranging a carpool. We encourage carpool drivers to establish their own ground rules; Pioneer Montessori School ground rules are listed throughout this handbook and may be used as guidelines. Please do not attempt to arrange after school transportation plans during school hours.

### ***Tuition & Fee Schedule***

Tuition may be paid in one or two annual payments, or in monthly payments throughout the school year. For current tuition prices, please refer to our website or contact the Administrative Offices.  
[www.pioneermontessorischool.org/school-information/tuition](http://www.pioneermontessorischool.org/school-information/tuition)

*Tuition is anticipated to increase 5% - 10% each year.*

In the case of separated or divorced parents, the parent who signs the enrollment contract is responsible for the payment of all tuition fees. If special arrangements are needed for the handling of tuition, contact the Business Manager to discuss your request.

Please indicate on the memo line of your check the purpose of any payment you make to the Pioneer Montessori School. While we prefer cash or check, Pioneer Montessori School does accept credit card payments with a 3% processing fee.

### ***Tuition Enrollment Agreement***

#### **Tuition Enrollment Agreement for PrePrimary Students**

Prior to beginning each school year, every PrePrimary student must submit a signed Tuition Enrollment Agreement along with the non-refundable tuition deposit. This contract states withdrawal deadlines, the penalties of missed deadlines, the termination rights of the Pioneer Montessori School, and payment options. We encourage families to read these contracts carefully every school year and to contact the Business Manager with any subsequent questions. Students will not be allowed to begin the school year without having first submitted this contractual Tuition Enrollment Agreement. Please consult your current school calendar for the Re-Enrollment deadline.

### Continuous Enrollment for Primary and Elementary Students

Students in Primary and Elementary environments must submit a Continuous Enrollment Contract and accompanying non-refundable enrollment deposit prior to entering each environment. This contract reflects the importance of the three year cycle. This contract states withdrawal deadlines, the penalties of missed deadlines, the termination rights of the Pioneer Montessori School, and payment options. We encourage families to read these contracts carefully every school year and to contact the Business Manager with any subsequent questions. Students will not be allowed to begin the school year without having first submitted this contractual Continuous Enrollment Agreement. Please consult your current school calendar for the Re-Enrollment deadline.

### ***Website***

The Pioneer Montessori School website is a great source of information for a quick guide, current school events, upcoming events, school and teacher information, and so much more.

[www.pioneermontessorischool.org](http://www.pioneermontessorischool.org)

## **GLOSSARY OF MONTESSORI TERMS**

There are several terms in our daily Montessori lives that we, as faculty, staff and administrators, use on a daily basis. Some of these terms have become a part of our everyday vernacular, while others are less used, but equally as thought provoking. Below are some brief descriptions of Montessori terminology.

***Absorbent mind***

A mind able to absorb knowledge quickly and effortlessly. Montessori said the child from birth to six years has an “absorbent mind.”

***Adaptation***

Related to the idea of an absorbent mind (Haines, 1993) is a special power of the young child that can be called the power of adaptation. This power is a process whereby the young child absorbs the culture of her time and place, taking in all the spirit, the customs, the ambitions and attitudes of a society simply by living in that society.

***Analysis of movement***

A technique used by Montessori teachers. The adult, when showing a complex action to a child, breaks it down into its parts and shows one step at a time, executing each movement slowly and exactly. The action thus becomes a sequence of simple movements and the child has a greater chance of success when “given the liberty to make use of them.” (Montessori, 1996, p. 108)

***Children’s House***

The English name for Montessori’s “Casa dei Bambini” (Italian). A place for children from 3-6 years to live and grow. Everything necessary for optimal human development is included in a safe and secure environment.

***Classification***

Sorting. Allocating or distributing according to common characteristics. The young child engages in classification activities because the process is essential for the construction of the intellect. The Montessori classroom offers many opportunities for classification.

***Concentration***

The act of concentrating. The young child focuses his or her attention on aspects of the environment essential for development. From a Montessori perspective, concentration is “a consistent activity concentrated on a single work –an exercise on some external object, where the movements of the hands are guided by the mind.” (1983, p. 149). Deep engagement.

***Concrete to abstract***

A progression both logical and developmentally appropriate. The child is introduced to a concrete material that embodies an abstract idea such as size or color. With hands-on experience, the child’s mind grasps the idea inherent in the material and forms an abstraction. Only as the child develops is he or she gradually able to comprehend the same idea in symbolic form.

***Control of error***

A way of providing instant feedback. Every Montessori activity provides the child with some way of assessing his or her own progress. This puts the control in the hands of the learner and protects the young child’s self-esteem and self-motivation. Control of error is an essential aspect of auto-education.

***Coordination of movement***

One of the major accomplishments of early childhood. Through the child’s own activity, she refines muscular coordination and consequently acquires increasingly higher levels of independent

functioning. Because of this developmental need, children are drawn to activities which involve movement and especially to pastimes which demand a certain level of exactitude and precision.

### ***Creativity/imagination***

Imagination involves the forming of a mental concept of what is not actually present to the senses. Creativity is a product of the imagination and results from the mental recombining of imagined ideas in new and inventive ways. Both are dependent mental imagery formed through sensorial experience.

### ***Cycle of activity***

Children, when engaged in an activity that interests them, will repeat it many times and for no apparent reason, stopping suddenly only when the inner need which compelled the child to activity has been satisfied. To allow for the possibility of long, concentrated work cycles, Montessori advocates a 3-hour uninterrupted work period.

### ***Development of the will***

The ability to will, or choose to do something with conscious intent, develops gradually during the first phase of life and is strengthened through practice. The Montessori environment offers many opportunities for the child to choose. Willpower, or self-control, results from the many little choices of daily life in a Montessori school.

### ***Deviations***

Behavior commonly seen in children that is the result of some obstacle to normal development. Such behavior may be commonly understood as negative, (a timid child, a destructive child, etc.) or positive (a passive, quiet child). Both positive and negative deviations disappear once the child begins to concentrate on a piece of work freely chosen.

### ***Discipline from within***

Self-discipline. The discipline in a well-run Montessori classroom is not a result of the teacher's control or of rewards or punishments. Its source comes from within each individual child, who can control his or her own actions and make positive choices regarding personal behavior. Self-discipline is directly related to development of the will.

### ***Exercises of Practical Life***

This is one of the four areas of the Montessori prepared environment. The exercises of practical life resemble the simple work of life in the home: sweeping, dusting, washing dishes, etc. These purposeful activities help the child adapt to his or her new community, learn self-control, and begin to see himself as a contributing part of the social unit. His or her intellect grows as he works with his or her hands; his or her personality becomes integrated as body and mind function as a unit.

### ***False fatigue***

A phenomenon observed in Children's Houses around the world, often at approximately 10 a.m. The children seem to lose interest in work, behavior becomes disorderly, and the noise level rises. It may appear as if the children are tired. However, if the classroom guide understands this is simply false fatigue, they will return to work on their own and their work will be at an even higher level than before.

### ***Grace and courtesy***

An aspect of Practical Life. Lessons which demonstrate positive social behavior help the young child adapt to life in a group and arm him or her with knowledge of socially acceptable behavior; practical information, useful both in and out of school.

### ***Help from periphery***

The periphery is that part of the child that comes into contact with external reality. The child takes in impressions through the senses and through movement. Help from periphery means presenting objects and activities in such a way so as to evoke purposeful movement on the part of the child. “We never give to the eye more than we give to the hand.” (Standing, 1957, p. 237).

### ***Human tendencies***

A central tenet of Montessori philosophy is that human beings exhibit a predisposition to exploration, orientation, order, abstraction, work, self-perfection, communication and a spiritual life. The tendencies are universal, spanning age, culture and racial barriers; they have existed since the dawn of the species and are probably evolutionary in origin. “Montessori stresses the need to serve those special traits that have proven to be tendencies of man throughout history.” (Mario Montessori, 1966, p. 21).

### ***Independence***

Not depending on another – “with various shades of meaning.” (OED, p. 836). Normal development milestones such as weaning, talking, etc., can be seen as a series of events which enable the child to achieve increased individuation, autonomy, and self-regulation. Throughout the four planes of development, the child and young adult continually seek to become more independent. It’s as if the child says, “Help me to help myself.”

### ***Isolation of difficulty***

Before giving a presentation, the Montessori teacher analyzes the activity she wants to show the child. Procedures or movements that might prove troublesome are isolated and taught to the child separately. For example, the simple movement of holding and snipping with scissors is shown before cutting curved or zigzag lines; folding cloths is shown before table washing, an activity requiring folding. A task should neither be so hard that it is overwhelming, nor so easy that it is boring.

### ***Indirect preparation***

The way nature has of preparing the intelligence. In every action, there is a conscious interest. Through this interest, the mind is being prepared for something in the future. For example, a child will enjoy the putting together of various triangular shapes, totally unaware that because of this work his or her mind will later be more accepting of geometry. Also called “remote preparation,” the deeper educational purpose of many of the Montessori activities is remote in time.

### ***Language appreciation***

From the very first days in the Montessori classroom, children are given the opportunity to listen to true stories about known subjects, told with great expression. Songs, poems and rhymes are a part of the daily life of the class. The teacher models the art of conversation and respectfully listens to her students. Looking at beautiful books with lovely, realistic pictures is also a part of language appreciation.

### ***Learning explosions***

Human development is often not slow and steady; acquisitions seem to arrive suddenly, almost overnight, and with explosive impact. Such learning explosions are the sudden outward manifestation of a long process of internal growth. For example, the explosion of spoken language around two years of age is the result of many months of inner preparation and mental development.

### ***Mathematical mind***

All babies are born with mathematical minds. That is, they have a propensity to learn things which enhance their ability to be exact and orderly, to observe, compare and classify. Humans naturally tend to calculate, imagine, abstract and create. But this vital part of intelligence must be given help

and direction for it to develop and function. If mathematics is not part of the young child's experience, his or her subconscious mind will not be accepting of it at a later date.

### ***Maximum effort***

Children seem to enjoy difficult work, work which tests their abilities and provides a sense of their growing power. They exult in giving their maximum effort. A tiny child will struggle to carry a tray with juice glasses or push a heavy wheelbarrow whereas school age children, if allowed to make up their own problems will prefer to sink their teeth into a challenging equation ( $1+2+3+4\dots+10$ ) rather than drill on  $3+5=_$  and  $6+2=_$ .

### ***Memory games***

During the age period of 3-6, children build their memory; sensorial games provide children an opportunity to strengthen their mental muscles. A typical game goes like this: A child picks up a geometric shape from a drawer, lightly traces the shape with her fingers, and sets it on the table. She must then carry that shape in her mind as she walks across a room full of distractions and finds its match amongst a set of cards at the opposite end of the room. Games like this build visual memory, a key component of reading. Similar games are played using other sensory modes: auditory, tactile, etc.

### ***Mixed ages***

One of the hallmarks of the Montessori method is that children of mixed ages work together in the same class. Age-groupings are based on developmental planes. Toddlers participate in the Infant Community (PrePrimary). Children from 3 to 6 years of age are together in the Children's House (Primary). Six to 9-year-olds share the lower elementary, and the upper elementary is made up of 9 to 12-year-olds. Because the work is individual, children progress at their own pace; there is cooperation rather than competition between the ages.

### ***Normalization***

If children are repeatedly able to experience periods of spontaneous concentration on a piece of work freely chosen, they will begin to display the characteristics of normal development; a love of work, attachment to reality, and a love of silence and working alone. Normalized children are happier children: enthusiastic, generous, and helpful to others. They make constructive work choices, and their work reflects their level of development.

### ***Obedience***

An act of will that develops gradually, showing itself "unexpectedly at the end of a long process of maturation." (Montessori, 1967, p. 257). While the inner development is going on, little children may obey occasionally, but be completely unable to obey consistently. As their will develops through exercise of free choice, children begin to have the self-discipline or self-control necessary for obedience.

### ***Points of interest***

Montessori realized that if children spend too much time on a complex task or fail to master necessary details, the exercise ceases to interest them. She suggested that points of interest be interspersed throughout each activity. These points guide the child toward the goal and stimulate repetition and interest by offering immediate feedback, or what Montessori called "control of error." The child's performance becomes refined through trial and error, the points of interest acting as signposts along the path to success.

### ***Prepared environment***

The Montessori classroom is an environment prepared by the adult for children. It contains all the essentials for optimal development and nothing superfluous. These include order and reality, beauty and simplicity. Materials are child-sized to enhance the children's independent functioning. Trained

adult and a large enough group of normalized children of mixed ages make up a vital part of the prepared environment.

### ***Presentation***

The teacher does not teach in the traditional sense, but rather shows the child how to use the various objects and then leaves him or her free to explore and experiment. This is called a presentation. To be effective, it must be done slowly and exactly, step by step, and with a minimum of words.

### ***Psychic embryo***

The first three years of life is a period of mental concentration, just as the nine months in utero is a period of physical creation. The brain awaits experience in the environment to flesh out the genetic blueprint. Since so much mental development occurs after birth, Montessori called the human infant a psychic embryo.

### ***Repetition***

The young child's work is very different from the adult's. When an adult works, s/he sets out to accomplish some goal and stops working when the objective is achieved. A child, however, does not work to accomplish an external goal, but rather an internal one. Consequently, they will repeat an activity until the inner goal is accomplished. The unconscious urge to repeat helps the child to coordinate a movement or acquire some ability.

### ***Sensitive periods***

Young children experience transient periods of sensibility and are intrinsically motivated or urged to activity by specific sensitivities. A child in a sensitive period is believed to exhibit spontaneous concentration when engaged in an activity that matches a particular sensitivity. For example, children in a sensitive period for order will be drawn to activities that involve ordering. They will be observed choosing such activities, becoming deeply concentrated, sometimes repeating the activity over and over, without reward or encouragement. Young children are naturally drawn to aspects in the environment that meet their developmental needs.

### ***Sensorial materials***

The sensorial materials were created to help children in the process of creating and organizing their intelligence. Each scientifically designed material isolates a quality found in the world such as color, size, shape, etc., and this isolation focuses the attention on this one aspect. The child, through repeated manipulation of these objects, comes to form clear ideas or abstractions. What could not be explained by words, the child learns by experience working with the sensorial materials.

### ***Simple to complex***

Moving from the simple to the complex is a principal used in the sequence of presentations in a Montessori classroom. Children are first introduced to a concept or idea in its simplest form. As they progress and become capable of making more complex connections, they are eventually able to handle information that is less isolated.

### ***Socialization***

"The process by which the individual acquires the knowledge and dispositions that enables him to participate as an effective member of a social group and a given social order." (Osterkorn, 1980, p. 12) "Optimal social learning takes place when the children are at different ages." (Hellbrugge, 1979, p. 14).

### ***Sound games***

Many children know the alphabet but have not analyzed the sounds in words nor are they aware that words are made up of separate sounds (phonemic awareness). From the age of two (or as soon as

the child is speaking fluently) sound games can make them aware of the sounds in words. In England, they use the nursery game, "I Spy." The sound of the letter and not the letter name is pronounced.

### ***Three hour work cycle***

Through years of observation around the world, Montessori understood that children, when left in freedom, displayed a distinct work cycle that was so predictable, it could even be graphed. This cycle, with two peaks and one valley, lasted approximately three hours. In Montessori schools, children have three hours of open, uninterrupted time to choose independent work, become deeply engaged, and repeat to their own satisfaction.

### ***Three period lesson***

"The famous three period lesson of Sequin" (Standing, 1957, p. 307) is actually quite simple. The first period is Naming: "This is thick. This is thin." The second period is Recognition: "Give me the thick. Give me the thin." The third period consists of The Pronunciation of the Word: "What is this?" In three simple steps, the entire learning process is brought into play. The three period lesson is used to provide students with the appropriate contextual language.

### ***Vocabulary enrichment***

The young child's vocabulary increases exponentially in the years from 3-6. To feed this natural hunger for words, vocabulary is given: the names of biology, geometry, geography, and so forth, can be learned as well as the names of qualities found in the sensorial material. The child's absorbent mind takes in all these new words "rapidly and brilliantly." (Montessori, 1946, p. 10)

### ***Work***

From an evolutionary perspective, the long period of childhood exists so children can learn and experiment in a relatively pressure-free environment. Most social scientists refer to this pressure-free experimentation as "play," although Montessori prefers to call this activity the "work" of childhood. Children are serious when engaged in the kind of play that meets developmental needs. Given freedom and time, they choose purposeful activities over frivolous ones.

### ***Writing to reading***

In a Montessori environment, children usually begin writing before they can read. They are keen to create words with a box of loose letters (the moveable alphabet) or write their words with chalk or pencil. About six months later, they begin to understand what reading means, and they do so only through associating it with writing. (Montessori, 1936/1983, p. 142)