



Northfield Montessori

Family Handbook

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Hours: 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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Equal Opportunity Provider

A Not-For-Profit, Parent/Teacher Co-op

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WELCOME

Welcome to our Northfield Montessori community!

Knowing firsthand the importance of peace of mind when choosing a center for your child care needs, we understand this decision is deeply important and can often be a challenge. Entrusting your child to another is a decision that tugs at the heart. You also seek excellence in education. We are honored that you have chosen us and are thrilled to partner with you in this very busy season of life! We look forward to being a reliable resource and trusted confidant as we journey together, watching and guiding as your child grows.

If at any time you have a question or need, please reach out to your child’s teacher or a member of the administrative team. We value open communication and are here to welcome you any time you would like to drop in and say hello or stay for a visit. Best of all, we look forward to the hundreds of good mornings and good nights and the thousands of joy-filled memories in between.

Again, welcome to our Northfield Montessori family! We are so very glad you are here!

NORTHFIELD MONTESSORI MISSION & VISION

As a not-for-profit, parent-teacher cooperative, we are dedicated to the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of children ages 6 weeks to 6 years.

Northfield Montessori is dedicated to serving families with young children who have long work schedules, early morning starts, and extended afternoon commutes, all with limited annual closings. We desire to be the reliable resource in meeting your needs and offering a schedule that allows space for you to manage your busy work schedule and the needs of your growing family with the confidence and peace of mind that your child is enjoying their day exploring and learning with friends and caring staff.

We are passionate educators who will quickly become an advocate for both you and your child. With a deep value for open and ongoing communication, the Northfield Montessori teaching team and administration is here to be your biggest fan. We believe our partnership builds incredible community that fosters friendships long after your family has graduated from our school.

NORTHFIELD MONTESSORI'S BEGINNINGS

In the spring of 1997, ownership of a multi-site Montessori program shared they would be closing its Northfield location, giving staff and families a few short weeks to find alternative care and employment. Despite the news, parents and staff partnered together, working tirelessly to gather supplies and design a nonprofit structure. These efforts resulted in the formation of a parent-teacher co-op, now known as Northfield Montessori. On June 1, 1997, Northfield Montessori opened its doors and has been serving children ages 6 weeks to 6 years ever since.

OUR FOUNDATION: THE MONTESSORI METHOD

Montessori is a method of education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative play. In Montessori classrooms, children make creative choices in their learning, while the trained teacher and the classroom environment offer age-appropriate activities to guide the process. Children work in groups and individually to discover and explore knowledge of the world and to develop their maximum potential.

Montessori classrooms are crafted environments designed to meet the needs of children in a specific age range. Dr. Maria Montessori discovered that experiential learning led to a deeper understanding of language, mathematics, science, music, social interactions, and much more. Each Montessori Works material supports an aspect of child development, creating a match between the child's natural interests and the available activities. Children can learn through their own experience and at their own pace. They can respond at any moment to the natural curiosities that exist in all humans and build a solid foundation for life-long learning. (www.montessori-nw.org)

OUR GOALS FOR THE CHILDREN

The goals of a Montessori education are to help each child develop fundamental habits, attitudes, skills, appreciations, and ideas for a lifetime of successful learning and living. To that end, we have the following goals for the children at the center:

Develop a positive attitude toward school: Most of the learning activities are individualized and the children engage in learning tasks that have particular appeal to them since they are geared to their needs and level of readiness. They work at their own pace, repeating the task as often as desired. In doing so, they experience a series of successful achievements and develop a positive attitude toward learning.

Develop self-confidence: Montessori tasks are designed so that each new step is built on past successes. Such success develops self-confidence and contributes to sound emotional and academic development.

Build concentration: Based on this program of step-by-step learning, the children form habits of extended attention and increased concentration abilities.

Foster an abiding curiosity: A deep, persistent, and abiding curiosity fosters ongoing creative learning. By providing children with opportunities to discover qualities, dimensions, and relationships in a rich variety of learning situations, the natural desire to know is developed into a lifelong habit of creative learning.

Develop initiative and persistence: By encouraging the children to self-select appealing materials and activities geared to their needs and current level of capability, they gradually develop the habit of initiative. Since ground rules call for completing a task once it has begun and for replacing materials after the task is accomplished, the habit of persistence is also fostered. Both initiative and persistence are key elements to success in learning, working, and relationships.

Provide security and sense of order: Through a well-ordered, enriched, and organized environment, children's natural need for order and security is satisfied. Since every item in a Montessori classroom has a place, and since ground rules require that everything be in its place, they learn to maintain order. Such an environment can have a calming effect on children and promotes a sense of security essential to sound emotional growth.

Develop sensory motor skills: Montessori activities call for handling and manipulating a wide variety of specially designed materials. In addition to accommodating and directing children's energies, these tasks teach control and coordination of large and small muscles. Such control and coordination are important to a wide spectrum of activities including learning to write, play a musical instrument, and/or athletic performance.

Sharpen the ability to differentiate: Sorting and matching activities teach children to note similarities and differences in size, shape, color, texture, odor, and sound, helping shape sensory acuity. This is the foundation on which to build the ability to differentiate various qualities in their ever expanding world.

Encourage social development: Through working and interacting with others, children learn to cooperate. Ground rules direct such interaction, fostering an understanding and appreciation of respect

for others.

Foster creative intelligence and imagination: Stimulating programmed activities encourage exciting feelings and perceptions of the school experience. In acquiring thousands of clear perceptions from well-planned practical life, sensorial, mathematical, musical, art, language, and science activities, the child masters the mental building blocks needed to grasp the ever increasing ideas and concepts for learning and living effectively and successfully.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Over the years, we have found that we truly are better when we are together. The heart of Northfield Montessori is the relationships that last a lifetime. We strive to foster a strong, engaged community of parents, teachers, and administrators.

Throughout the year, you will find many opportunities to get connected. Periodically, the center will host community events like a family water play day, the annual picnic, and parent nights out. We have parent volunteer days where you can roll up your sleeves and support your child's center with special work projects both inside the building and on the outside grounds. You can chaperone a fieldtrip. You can volunteer in the classroom by reading a story or sharing something meaningful to you or your child. You can serve on one of our school committees hosted by the Board of Directors. The possibilities are endless! To learn more about volunteer opportunities or about one of our many community events hosted throughout the year, please stop by the front office, and connect with the center director.

FUNDRAISING

Another way we gather together as community is by investing in financial generosity and fundraising efforts to ensure our beloved school's success both now and for many years to come. While weekly tuition guarantees a clean, safe, and quality program for our children each day, the generosity of our families, alumni, and extended community is where we can dream big dreams and achieve the very best for our children.

As a nonprofit, your financial donations are tax deductible. Donations contribute directly to classroom materials, teacher professional development, capital investments, and future expansion. The possibilities are limitless and the Board of Directors and leadership are committed to stewarding your generosity well. Whether you invest a little or a little more, it all counts.

Some of the favorite ways our families enjoy investing in our school include:

Join the Soiree: Northfield Montessori's Annual Soiree is our big fall fundraising event and an absolute community highlight of the year! The Soiree is an adult-only event where current families, alumni, Montessori enthusiasts, and extended friends, family, and neighbors gather together to celebrate our favorite school, all for a great cause. Whether you donate an item for the silent auction, encourage a business to sponsor, volunteer your time, or attend the event – your contribution will make this year's Soiree the best yet!

Make a Tax Deductible Donation: Make a single donation or even consider adding a modest weekly or monthly amount to be deducted from your account. Some families also donate the equivalent of one month tuition when their child graduates. Over time \$5 turns into \$50 and \$50 turns into \$500 and collectively we can raise thousands each year!

Inquire about a company match or Soiree sponsorship from your employer: We have discovered that the companies we work for can be wonderfully generous. To learn more about your company match programs (either for volunteer hours or financial support), check with your HR division. To learn more about how to invite your company to become a Soiree Sponsor, please see the center director. We have a variety of levels of sponsorship, a formal request letter, and a donation receipt as company sponsorships are tax deductible.

Shop at AmazonSmile: You shop. Amazon gives. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases when you choose Northfield Montessori as your charitable organization of choice. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Simply switch your shopping to smile.amazon.com today!

To learn more about any of the ways to contribute listed above, please stop by the front desk or connect with the center director.

ENROLLMENT

Once a spot is available and you have decided to officially enroll with Northfield Montessori, we require that you complete an initial registration form and pay a **\$200 non-refundable** fee to secure your enrollment. If an enrollment spot is open before your desired start date, a weekly holding fee will also be collected to secure your registration. Holding fees are determined by the existing wait-list and will be shared during the enrollment process. The enrollment fee is to be paid at the time of enrollment. Holding fees are scheduled at the time of enrollment and paid according to the payment schedule. All enrollment and holding fees are nonrefundable except in the event that a family is unable to enroll due to an unborn child.

To complete your enrollment process, you will be required to fill out an enrollment packet. This packet includes a getting-to-know-your-child sheet, required licensing and center paperwork, tuition agreements, health care summaries, and immunization forms. You may also need to provide an allergy or health plan or IEP if applicable to your child. All paperwork along with the first week's tuition will be due one week prior to the child's start date. No child will be able to successfully begin their first day in attendance without all completed paperwork and initial tuition payment.

If your child has any special needs, please discuss them with the center director during the enrollment process.

SUMMER SESSION

Northfield Montessori offers a summer session in addition to the regular academic year, to provide a 12 month program for your child. Summer programming also allows flexibility for families in their enrollment including registering 6 year-olds who are post-kindergarten. Temporary schedule changes may also be considered based on center availability.

The summer program offers additional opportunities for recreational field trips, crafts, exploration, and special activities such as theme weeks, cooking projects, puzzles, games, and more. Academic year learning materials are still available for your child as well.

For all current families, summer enrollment forms will be handed out and must be returned to the center by the April deadline to secure summer enrollment. Beginning May 1, all open summer enrollment will be made available to any new and alumni families who qualify and are interested in the summer session. After May 1, the general enrollment process will be followed including paperwork and applicable fees.

All tuition accounts must have a zero balance by May 15th for families to participate in the summer program.

TEMPORARY DISENROLLMENT

A family may disenroll for a minimum of 30 calendar days, up to three months. A non-refundable disenrollment fee is required to hold the family's spot for reenrollment. This flat rate fee is determined annually by the board of directors. A disenrollment form must be filled out and submitted at least 30 days in advance to the center director in order to ensure placement after the disenrollment period.

WITHDRAWAL

There is a 30-day written notification required prior to all withdrawals. If a written notice is not received by the center director, the parents or guardians will be responsible for a fee equal to four weeks of tuition.

If at any time a temporary disenrollment should change to a withdrawal, please notify the center director as quickly as possible. The required 30-days notification will take into effect and a final fee will be assessed.

TUITION

All tuition is billed weekly. Families have the choice to pay weekly or pay ahead four weeks on the first business day of every month. Tuition is paid in advance and deductions are made 52 weeks a year, regardless of child attendance.

Tuition may be paid electronically using our Tuition Express bank transfer or by credit card (applicable fees apply). Tuition may also be paid by check or cash, provided a current electronic secondary payment is on file.

You may review your current tuition balance at any time at the check-in/out kiosk or by using the MyProcure app.

All tuition must be paid in full each week. If paying by check, please make checks payable to “Northfield Montessori” with the dates for tuition coverage and the account name noted in the memo line. Payments should be deposited in the appropriate box at the school or mailed to the school. Tuition payments received after the first business day of the month (for monthly payments) or after Friday (for weekly payments) will be assessed a 5% late fee per day unpaid.

If for whatever reason you are temporarily unable to pay the full weekly amount of tuition, please notify the center director immediately. Tuition is required to be paid in full. If an extenuating circumstance is unavoidable, a temporary adjusted payment schedule may be arranged at the discretion of the center director.

If tuition remains unpaid at the end of the month, Northfield Montessori reserves the right to refuse student attendance while holding your child’s spot for up to 30 days before withdrawal is assumed. Please note, if a child’s spot is reserved, a weekly holding fee will be added to your tuition account. If a withdrawal is necessary, the remaining balance on the tuition account will be submitted to collections.

Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are all included in the weekly tuition amount. Field trips and certain special projects are not included in the weekly tuition amount.

There is a multi-child discount. Please ask the center director for details.

Families are allowed two schedule changes during Northfield Montessori’s fiscal year (July to June) at no cost. Beyond two changes, a fee will be charged.

If your child is enrolled fewer than 5 days a week, you have the opportunity to occasionally add days for your child if space allows. There is a daily charge of \$50 for preschool, \$60 for toddlers, and \$70 for infants for 8 hours or less. An additional \$10 per hour will be added for more than 8 hours. All schedule additions are subject to availability and must be approved by the administration.

An automatic tuition increase will be applied each September. Due to investing in staff retention and cost of living increases, you can expect the annual increase will be no less than 2% and no more than 6%. Tuition amounts are determined by the Board of Directors during the budget process and will be shared with the community no later than August 1st. The annual rate is in effect from September 1 through August 31 each year.

REFERRAL TUITION CREDIT

Any family can earn a \$100 tuition credit by referring new families to Northfield Montessori. The credit is received after the referred family’s third month of care.

ANNUAL SUPPLY FEE

In addition to the initial registration/enrollment fee per child, there is an annual supply fee added to your tuition account each September for the new program year. For families new to the center in September, the fall supply fee is included in your initial registration/enrollment fee.

FIELD TRIP & SPECIAL PROJECT FEE

Throughout the year, we delight in offering preschool children the opportunity to participate in field trips, special projects, and other experiential learning activities. Families who choose to participate will register with a signed permission slip and pay a field trip/special project fee (if applicable). These fees can be added to your tuition account for ease or paid independently by check, credit card, or cash.

LATE FEE & STAY & PLAY FEE

The center closes at 6:00 p.m. promptly. If a child is not picked up by this time, a late fee will be charged. The fee of \$20.00 per any portion of 15 minutes past closing time will be charged. If a parent is late picking up their child more than three times during the calendar year, the late fee will be changed to \$30.00 per 15 minutes. Parents should call the center to explain delays. This is helpful in making staffing arrangements, as well as being less stressful for your child. We will attempt to contact your Emergency Contacts if you cannot be reached. If a parent has not called the center or picked up the child by 7:00 p.m., Northfield Montessori reserves the right to contact the proper authorities. **Under no circumstances will the center release your child to an unauthorized OR incapacitated person.**

Preschool children who participate in the full-day program of 8:00 a.m. -3:30 p.m., must be picked up on time to avoid the stay and play fee. A fee of \$15.00 per 15 minutes per child will be charged. If you would like your child to come in earlier or stay longer please reach out to the Director at least 24 hours in advance.

PROGRAM HOURS OF OPERATION

Northfield Montessori is open Monday through Friday (excluding Board approved annual closings) from 6am until 6pm. According to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, our license does not allow for us to open for program operation beyond these hours. Therefore children are not able to arrive prior to 6am and are required to be picked up by 6pm. *Please note: Parents are always welcome and encouraged to visit the center at any time during our hours of operation.*

CHILD CHECK IN AND RELEASE

Northfield Montessori utilizes a software system called Procure, allowing parents and authorized pickup people to check in their child(ren) via a biometric ID pad and a small touch screen. Upon your start here, you will be provided with a temporary registration number and system instructions that you will use to set up your Procure account. Please see the front desk administration with any questions about Procure. Northfield Montessori utilizes Procure's web-based service "KidReports" as a parent communication portal allowing parents to see daily reports, photos, and activities from their child's classroom.

It is important to sign your child in and out each day. We use this system in an emergency situation to ensure that all children are accounted for.

Children will not be released to anyone not listed on the Child Information/Emergency card unless direct communication by the parent is made to the center. A picture ID is required to be shown before a child will be released to someone unknown to the staff. **Under no circumstances will the center release your child to an unauthorized or incapacitated person.**

In the event that only one parent has custody of the child, the custodial parent must furnish a copy of the appropriate legal document to the center stating they have sole custody.

MONTESSORI ANNUAL CALENDAR OF CLOSINGS

Each year, the Board of Directors adopts and publishes a calendar of closings for the upcoming year. Closings include holidays, early closures, professional development days, and cleaning days. There is no tuition credit for any closures. Current approved calendars can be found on the center website or in paper format at the front desk.

If the center has a need to close for an additional, unscheduled day, as much notice as possible will be given using our Facebook page, email list, and classroom communication tools.

SNOW DAY POLICY

Northfield Montessori realizes that closing the school can be a major inconvenience for parents, especially for those who work outside of Northfield. While it is our desire and goal to remain open, the safety of the children and staff are our first priority. If conditions are extreme and not expected to improve making it dangerous for families and staff to travel to and from Northfield Montessori, we will close the school. The decision to close the school will be made in a timely manner by the center director and the Chair of the Board of Directors. We do not follow Northfield School District school closures. Updates and notices will be posted on our Facebook page and will be sent to each family by email and through KidReports. Please note there will be no refunds or credits given to families for a snow day.

TEXT ALERTS

Northfield Montessori families are encouraged to sign up to receive text alerts from the center. The purpose of the text alert system is to inform families and staff of center closures, late starts, and early closures during severe winter weather. Text alerts also provide a way to communicate to families and staff of important emails about the center being sent out such as classroom quarantines. To sign up, text "northfield montessori" to 888-512-0644.

PART TIME ADD-IN DAYS

Children with a part time schedule may request to add in an occasional extra day of care. These days must be preapproved by the center director and will only be considered on a case by case occurrence. Add-in days are considered extra days and cannot not be switched with a regularly scheduled day for tuition credit. An add-in daily rate will be charged to your tuition account once the day has been

approved.

If for whatever reason you do not attend on the approved add-in day, please notify the front desk within 24 hours of the scheduled day so that the extra charge can be avoided. Because special staffing may be arranged for the accommodation, if the center has not been notified within 24 hours of the scheduled day, it is the family's responsibility to pay for the additional charge.

PROGRAM PLANS

Each classroom has their own specific program plan displayed in in the classroom for each parent to see. It is available at all times. Collective copies of all classroom program plans for those parents who wish to see them are available upon request from the front desk.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are included in the tuition. Milk and 100% juice are provided by the school. Fresh fruits and vegetables are incorporated into the menu. Parents may provide a lunch that does not require heating, if so desired, or if a child has special dietary circumstances. Please remember food brought in must be nut free and labeled with first and last name and the date.

NAPS AND REST

Most full-time preschool children are offered an opportunity to nap or rest. Please be sure to connect with your child's teacher regarding rest time needs and preferences for your child.

Toddler nap time follows lunch. Infants will be allowed to nap on their own schedule as discussed and agreed upon between parents and the teacher.

All naps and rest periods will be provided in a quiet area which is physically separated from children who are engaged in activity which would disrupt a napping or resting child. During naps and rest periods, children generally rest on cots. A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for 30 minutes will not be required to remain on the cot.

Children toddler through preschool may have a blanket, cover, and soft snuggle item brought from home. These supplies will be kept at the center and sent home weekly or as needed for washing. Be sure these items are labeled well. Infants are only allowed to have sleep sacks and pacifiers in the crib with them. They cannot have blankets, snuggle items or other items in the crib.

FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the year, Northfield Montessori arranges a variety of fieldtrips for preschoolers to enjoy. Parents are required to sign a permission slip for each occasion. These permission slips will be supplied by the center. First aid kits, emergency information for the children, and permission slips are taken on all field trips. For ease of identification, we have field trip shirts for purchase. On the day of the field trip we encourage all children to wear their shirts.

Parents are encouraged to attend field trips as chaperones when space permits. To learn more about field trip participation, please contact your child's teacher or inquire at the front desk.

TOYS FROM HOME

To help prevent toys or special items from home from getting lost or broken and to spare children from unnecessary hurt feelings, we ask that toys and special items remain at home. Exceptions to this rule would be a soft snuggle item for rest time that is only to be used at rest time or items for designated "Show and Tell" days assigned by the classroom teacher. Because sharing is an important concept to foster in young children, these "Show and Tell" days are thoughtfully planned and prepared for all children to enjoy. On these special days, we encourage children to bring items that can be shared by the whole group, like books or music. Please be sure the child's name is clearly marked on items brought from home.

PETS

Periodically there are small animals present in the classrooms. It is Northfield Montessori's policy to purchase these animals from reputable pet dealers who ensure their animals have been properly cared for and inoculated. These pet dealers have been licensed in accordance with the local health rules and regulations. In addition, it is our practice to follow all health and safety regulations regarding care and maintenance of the pet while in our care.

BIRTHDAYS

Your child's birthday will be a special occasion. While not expected, you may choose to provide a treat to celebrate. Treats need not be food. For example, a book donation to the class or stickers to share make wonderful items to celebrate. However, if your treat of choice does include food, it must be commercially purchased and must be peanut or tree nut free. Northfield Montessori prohibits homemade treats.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

The difference between a good experience and an amazing one is found in the home-to-school connection and parent-teacher partnership. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher in person, by phone, or via email if a need should arise. For the benefit of your child, please use discretion when commenting on or discussing your needs or concerns. When discussing a child's educational or social participation in the classroom, comments should not be made in the presence of the child, other children, or other parents. The teaching team, staff, and administration is interested in remaining positive and maintaining confidentiality at all times.

To help foster intentional investment in this vital partnership, two conferences will be scheduled annually to discuss with parents their child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development through goal setting and reviews. Parents may also request a conference whenever they feel there is a need. A record of school initiated conferences will be maintained in the child's file.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

While we all want to believe that our children are angels all the time, we recognize that behavior issues are common in young children. Our behavior guidance policy is designed to:

- Ensure that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior.
- Be tailored to the developmental level of the children we serve.
- Redirect children in groups away from problems and toward constructive activities in order to reduce conflict.
- Teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict.
- Protect the safety of children and staff.
- Provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

Appropriate alternatives to corporal punishment vary as children grow and develop. As infants become more mobile, the staff will create a safe place and impose limitations by encouraging activities that distract them from harmful situations. Brief verbal expressions of disapproval help prepare infants and toddlers for later use of reasoning. For toddlers, disapproval will be followed with comments about expected behaviors. Preschoolers have begun to develop an understanding of rules and can understand “break time” to calm down (out-of-group activity by sending the child to a calming activity such as puzzles or sensory table). Children will never be isolated from the group. The teacher will follow up by asking a child about his/her feelings and suggest the appropriate behavior. School-age children begin to develop a sense of personal responsibility and self-control and will recognize the removal of privileges.

We promote positive behavior in the following ways:

- The classrooms are designed to be developmentally appropriate.
- There are sufficient toys and activities to stimulate children of all age groups we serve.
- The staff model, encourage, and praise positive behaviors by using clear and positive statements of behavior expectations.
- The curriculum is designed to be stimulating and age appropriate for the children.
- The staff appropriately supervise and interact with the children.

Persistent Unacceptable Behavior: Northfield Montessori will use the following procedure for behavior that is persistent, unacceptable, and requires an increased amount of staff guidance and time. This behavior policy applies to all children in our care. When staff observe a persistent unacceptable behavior, they will record the behavior in writing.

If a child is not behaving appropriately, we will use the following positive guidance technique:

- **Ignoring:** Ignoring a child who is trying to gain attention by acting out may be an appropriate response, unless it is a behavior that is unsafe.
- **Redirection/Distraction:** This technique offers an alternative to a child such as suggesting a new activity or a different toy, encouraging independent play, or interacting with the child in a different way.
- **Discussion:** Discussing with a child how their behavior is inappropriate and supporting the child

with other words or methods that would suggest a more appropriate response.

- **Reasonable Consequences:** Staff may implement reasonable consequences such as taking away the toy if the child used the toy to hit another child.
- **Take a Break:** The child is separated from the group to calm down and will have access to something else to do. While the child will remain supervised, his or her classmates will not immediately influence him or her. This is different from the concept of “time out” which is often seen as more punitive as the child is isolated and does nothing. In “taking a break” the child will have access to other activities while he or she settles down. Once the negative behavior is under control, the child can be returned to the group. *We do not use the “take a break” technique with children under 2 years of age.*

If these positive guidance techniques are not effective, we may involve parent/guardians with the following progressive guidance techniques:

- We will inform parents/guardians in writing what behaviors have been observed and what the staff has done to try to modify the behavior.
- If the inappropriate behavior continues, the center director and teacher will meet with the parents/guardians to develop a written action plan to correct the behavior. We will seek input and agree on steps to attempt to modify the behavior. We may suggest involving outside resources to assist with the situation.
- If the inappropriate behavior persists, the child may be required to take a day or two of behavioral leave on the next scheduled days of care. (Standard attendance rates do apply during behavioral leaves).
- After returning to group care, if a child continues to act inappropriately, we may consider disenrolling the child.

We reserve the right to use these progressive guidance techniques at our discretion. It is our goal to work together for the positive outcome and behavior change. Circumstances may arise when we must immediately disenroll a child if his or her behavior creates a health or safety risk to themselves, other children, or the staff.

Positive reinforcement is the best approach to discipline. The following actions are not allowed by or at the direction of a staff person:

- Subjecting a child to corporal punishment, which includes but is not limited to: rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, and spanking.
- Subjecting a child to emotional stress, which includes but is not limited to: name-calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about a child or a child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
- Separation of a child from a group except within rule requirements (see below).
- Punishments for lapses in toileting.
- Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.

- The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying.

Separation from the group: No child will be separated from the group unless less intrusive methods of guiding a child's behavior has been tried and were ineffective or the child's behavior threatens the well-being of the child or children in the program. Children between the ages of 6 weeks and 16 months will not be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.

A child who requires separation from the group will remain within an open part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a staff member. The child's return to the group will be contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that has precipitated the separation. The child will be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.

All separations from the group will be noted on a daily log that includes the child's name, the staff person's name, date and time, information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior, and how the child's behavior continued to threaten the well-being of the child or other children in our care. If a child is separated from the group three or more times in one day, the child's parent will be notified and the parent notification will be indicated on the daily log. If a child is separated five times or more in one week or eight times or more in 2 weeks, the procedures according to persistent unacceptable behaviors listed above will be followed.

MEDICAL RELEASE/CHILD INFORMATION/EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD

These cards must be returned to the center one week prior to the first day of attendance. Your signature on the card will allow the staff to seek medical attention for your child in the case of an emergency. If the parent has a specific medical center at which they prefer the child be treated in case of an emergency, a letter specifying the facility needs to be written to the center.

The information given on this card also provides the center with contact information for parents/guardians and additional people authorized to act on your behalf if we are unable to reach you. At least one emergency contact person must be within one hour of Northfield Montessori. Emergency contact forms are required by our license to be filled out in full, including contact name, phone number and address. Your child's doctor and dentist information must also be included.

Please remember to update Northfield Montessori regarding any changes in address, phone numbers, email, medical provider, and emergency contact information.

HEALTH INFORMATION

A Health Care Summary form and a Child Care Immunization Record are required for all children attending Northfield Montessori. The Immunization Record and Health Care Summary are due one week prior the first day the child attends school.

A Health Care Summary update is required at 12 months, 24 months, and 3 years of age. An additional update is also required at 5 years of age if your child is enrolled in the kindergarten program. These updates must be signed and dated by your health care provider.

Minnesota state law requires that proof of immunizations be furnished at the time of enrollment. The immunization form should be signed by your health care provider if the child is under 15 months old. If your child is over 15 months old and on schedule with their immunizations, a parent, guardian, or health care provider may sign the form. Check with your health care provider for the current recommended immunization schedule for children. **When your child receives immunizations, please bring an updated copy of their immunization record to the center.**

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the center of their child's special medical conditions, needs, and/or allergies. The staff is notified of all special conditions and they are posted in the kitchen and classroom areas.

IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Under Minnesota Statute 212A, Northfield Montessori is required to adhere to Minnesota's Immunization Law. Northfield Montessori cares for children ages 6 weeks to 6 years. Because of the immunity vulnerability of these children, unimmunized children will be excluded from Northfield Montessori.

Children will not be excluded for failure to be immunized if they have an appointment to update immunizations, have their catch-up immunizations initiated within one month of notification that they are behind on vaccines, and have a doctor's note with regards to a catch-up immunization schedule. A child whose immunizations are not kept up-to-date will be dismissed after three written reminders to the parent or legal guardian.

The Director or appointed administration team member will be responsible for checking the facility's records to be sure that each child's immunizations and other routine preventive health services are current. They will remind parents and guardians to provide documentation of health assessments.

CHILD ABSENCES

Please notify Northfield Montessori by 9am of the current school day if your child will be absent on one of their regularly scheduled days. Notification should be made by phone to the center at 507-663-1279 (24 hours a day) or emailed directly to your child's teacher. There is no tuition credit for child absences.

In absences related to illness, parents must notify the school within 24 hours of the onset of a contagious disease. If illness occurs over the weekend, please be sure to notify the center even if no school is missed. Our license requires us to post various contagious illness notices for the well-being of all classroom families.

KEEPING ILL CHILDREN HOME

For the protection of all children and in accordance with Minnesota Statute 9503.0080, parents must keep children at home, or a child will be sent home, if any of the following exist:

- Contagious illness or condition
- Chicken pox (until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are scabbed over)
- Vomited two or more times during the day (may return 24 hours after last vomit)
- Three or more abnormally loose stools during the day (may return 24 hours after last loose stool. Upon return if one loose stool occurs they will be sent home again with the clock reset)
- Contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye (may return 24 hours after starting drops and/or with a doctor's note)
- Bacterial infection such as streptococcal pharyngitis or impetigo (may return 24 hours after starting antibiotics)
- Unexplained lethargy
- Lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others (see below for details on head lice)
- A fever of 101°F (100°F axillary) or higher of undiagnosed origin before fever reducing medication is given (may return after they have been fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medication or with a doctor's note confirming fever is not related to a contagious condition (e.g., fever is due to teething, reaction to recent immunizations, ear infection, etc.))
- Undiagnosed rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition (may return when rash is gone and/or doctor's note confirms it is not contagious)
- Suffering from significant respiratory distress
- Unable to participate in child care program activities with reasonable comfort
- Requires more care than the program staff can provide without changing the nature of the program or compromising the health and safety of the other children

ILLNESS AT THE CENTER

If a child develops any of the above symptoms while at the center, the child will be isolated and one of the parents will be contacted to pick up the child *within one hour*. Parents must make arrangements necessary to have the child picked up within the one hour; otherwise the late fee policy will be put into effect. If the parent cannot be readily reached, the center will contact the designated individuals listed on the child's information card. The one hour time frame will still be upheld.

If a child is exposed to any contagious disease while at the center, an exposure notice will be posted. Northfield Montessori has a Health Consultant (registered nurse or doctor) who reviews our policies annually and visits monthly to support our classrooms and administration.

HEAD LICE

If a child is found to have head lice, parents will be contacted to pick up the child within one hour as above. The child may return to school after appropriate over the counter or prescription treatment has been administered, which should kill crawling lice. The child does not need to be nit-free before returning to school.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

Diapering Product, Sunscreen, or Insect Repellent: Written permission from the parent must be obtained before staff can administer any diapering product, sunscreen, or insect repellent. These items may not be in aerosol or powder form, must be in an original container, must be nut-free, and will be administered according to the manufacturer's instructions unless there are written instructions for their use provided by a licensed physician.

Prescription and Over the Counter (Non-Prescription) Medications: Before administering any prescription or non-prescription medication, written parent permission along with written instructions from a licensed physician, dentist, or manufacturer (if over the counter) is required. Of note, medication dosing for non-prescription medication is indicated on the medication box. We will follow dosing based on age, not weight. If the manufacturer notes "consult physician" for your child's age, you need to have a physician letter with the appropriate dosing for that medication before we can administer it at the center. Prescription medicine with the child's name and current prescription information constitutes instructions from the health care provider.

We will not administer Orajel or similar teething gels or tablets. Children are allowed teething rings and other non-medicated teething relief, which the center will provide.

All medications must be kept in their original container and have a legible label. A second container of medication can be requested from the pharmacy for use at the center. Medication will not be given after the expiration date on the label. Any unused portion will be returned to the parent. Medications will need to be turned in to and picked up from the front desk daily. Parents will need to fill out a medication authorization form if the center is to administer a medication.

The teacher will ensure that the administration of the medicine is recorded on a Medication Log form. The log will be maintained in the child's file and is available to the parent upon request. Only one Medication Log will be allocated for non-prescription medications before a doctor's note is required to continue the medication. It is center practice to refrain from using medication to mask or relieve ongoing symptoms (i.e. teething or allergies) without a health provider consent after two weeks (the length of one Medication Log).

Northfield Montessori will be responsible for administering the least amount of medication necessary (i.e. if a child is taking a three times a day medication, Northfield Montessori will administer the mid-day dose only).

ALL medicines, insect repellents, sunscreens, and diaper creams will be stored according to the directions on the original container and in an area inaccessible to the children.

Northfield Montessori employees will only administer oral or topical medications. A parent or guardian must administer rectal medications.

SAFETY

Safety at Northfield Montessori is of the utmost importance. By working together, we can increase the safety and well-being of all children at the center. Please obey the following safety guidelines pertaining to your children.

- Please drive slowly in the parking lot and stay alert to other cars and children. It only takes a second for a child to run out and not see a car.
- Please park in the designated parking spots only and remember ***your car MUST be turned off if it is not occupied by a legal driver.*** Leaving your car running while unattended is extremely dangerous and illegal.
- Minnesota law requires that all children under the age of eight must ride in a federally approved car or booster seat, unless the child is 4'9" or taller. Infants (under 20 pounds and one year of age) must be in a rear-facing safety seat. Please obey these laws. Northfield Montessori staff members are required to report any cases of children not restrained in a child safety seat to the proper authorities.
- Doors at Northfield Montessori are heavy and can easily pinch or sever a child's fingers. Please respect and reinforce with your child that doors are to be opened and closed by a staff member or parent only.
- Children **MUST** be accompanied by a parent at all times while in the building. Please do not allow your child to play the public areas or on the outdoor play equipment without your direct supervision. Please do not let your child play in other classrooms that are closed for the day.
- It is the parent's responsibility to accompany their child directly to their classroom at drop off time. Teachers are not allowed to do this for you, even if you are in a hurry.
- Parents are not allowed to escort children, other than their own, outside of the classroom area without expressed written or verbal permission from that child's parent. This permission must be provided to the center.
- During inclement weather, the parking lot, entry way, and hallway can be slippery. We will do our best to maintain safe conditions in these areas, but please be very careful when walking (especially when carrying children). If you notice an area that appears unsafe, please let us know so we can attend to it immediately.
- We are Minnesota nice, but safety is a top concern. Never hold the door for a person you do not know.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

At Northfield Montessori, steps are taken to maintain safety and avoid accidents. However, occasional slips and falls can occur any place where children play. Appropriate first aid is always the first step in the event of an accident. Serious accidents involving a child will be promptly reported to a parent. Accidents involving minor bruises or scrapes will be reported to the parent by logging the accidents/incidents in KidReports. This report will include any first aid measures that were carried out. Accidents and incidents will be listed on a daily log at the center. Licensing requires that any injury to the head or face, no matter how minor, be called to parents right away.

If it appears the accident may lead to future complications or in any way be serious enough to warrant medical attention, the following procedure will be used:

1. A staff member will carry out immediate first aid. All staff have been trained in first aid. A first aid handbook and kit is readily available in the center.
2. A staff member will contact the parent(s).
3. If the parents or listed alternate emergency contact cannot be reached, the center director will have the authority to call a previously designated physician and/or the local emergency unit for treatment and/or transportation to the hospital. A staff member will accompany the injured child to the hospital and stay until a parent arrives.
4. In some emergency situations, the staff will contact the local emergency unit before calling the parents (i.e. cessation of breathing). In this case, the following procedure will be used:
 - a. 911 will be called and staff will take whatever lifesaving measures necessary. There will always be at least one person (and usually many more) trained in CPR in the building.
 - b. The center director or other staff will accompany the child to the emergency room.
 - c. A staff member will call the parents or another emergency contact person.

OUTDOOR WEATHER POLICY

We live in Minnesota, so winter weather is going to be a part of our year. We try to get the children outside to play as often as possible, but there are limitations based on the weather. Temperature and wind chill must be above 20°F for preschool children and 30°F for toddlers to play outdoors. Our source for temperature ratings is www.weather.com. All attempts will be made for children to receive at least one scheduled outdoor play time per day when these conditions are met.

We recognize summer conditions can also be challenging. Based on temperature and humidity, shorter amounts of time may be spent outdoors.

TORNADO, FIRE, AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

Fire drills are held monthly and logged. Tornado drills will be held monthly from April through October and will also be logged. Lock-down drills are practiced four times a year. Procedures are posted in each classroom.

EMERGENCY MEETING PLACE

In the event that an emergency requires evacuation of the center, the designated emergency meeting area is the Northfield Ballroom located at 400 Montessori Court (shared parking lot). Their phone number is (507) 645-6110.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

As we continue to learn more about how to live with technology as an integral part of our daily lives, we believe it is best to maintain a school environment that allows our children to focus on building themselves as learners, thinkers, explorers, and communicators. Therefore, we limit the use of technology in our school.

Our infant and toddler rooms use iPads to capture milestones and memories and stay connected with families via KidReports, email, or social media on our private Facebook pages which are created for current classroom families. Music playlists are curated for physical movement, academic enrichment, and relaxation times. Watching devices such as iPads, televisions, or videos is not done.

Like the infant and toddler rooms, our preschool rooms use technology for parent communication, providing music, and documenting children's activities. The preschool rooms may also use technology in a thoughtfully expanded way. Teachers may expand a topic of learning by selecting a short 3-5 minute educational video to complement their lesson. iPads may be used for researching a topic (teacher guided) or as a reward for accomplishing a child's individual academic goal with a few minutes of iPad time, during which they may engage with their choice of a number of educational apps.

You may also see iPads used as a tool for managing busy transitions (i.e. regrouping ratios, bathroom breaks, resetting room activities, etc.) which include learning action songs, a small video short that fosters social and emotional learning, or viewing a book on DVD.

Please note that if your child would be in attendance for the full of hours of operation (6am-6pm, Monday through Friday), he or she would be exposed to less than two hours of total screen time in a given week.

Staff are not allowed to have their personal phones in the classrooms. Parents should contact teachers via KidReports, email, or by calling the center. Classroom emails are available on the Northfield Montessori website.

LICENSING

Our program is reviewed annually and licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. If you have any questions regarding our license or any licensing questions or concerns, you may contact the Minnesota Department Human Services at (651) 431-2000. Our license number is 811016. Northfield Montessori is licensed for 24 infants (ages 6 weeks to 16 months), 42 toddlers (ages 16 months to 33 months) and 120 preschool students (ages 33 months to 6 years). We also offer a kindergarten program for qualifying children and will not exceed 30 children with a combined kindergarten through preschool capacity of 120 maximum students.

MALTREATMENT REPORTING POLICY

We take child abuse and neglect very seriously and are required to report suspected abuse and neglect to the proper authorities in a timely manner. Below are the policies and procedures we follow:

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed

facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and are posted at the center.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the below agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Where to Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Rice County Social Services line at (507) 332-6115 or local law enforcement at (507) 645-4475.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency at (507) 645-9576 or local law enforcement at (507) 645-4475.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651) 431-2000.

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any person required to make mandated reports shall not retaliate against the person for reporting in good faith or retaliate against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE

As a nonprofit, Northfield Montessori is governed by an elected volunteer Board of Directors and the center director. Northfield Montessori's Board of Directors consists of eight parent representatives, three staff representatives, and the director of the center. Parent board members serve a 2-year term; staff members serve 1-year terms. A list of current board members' names and contact information is available upon request.

As a nonprofit, Northfield Montessori is required to hold an annual meeting each year. Northfield Montessori's annual parent meeting is held the third week in May in conjunction with our End of the School Year Potluck. At this meeting, parents receive the latest information about Northfield Montessori, have the opportunity to address questions to board members, and vote new parent members to the Board of Directors. If you are interested in serving on the Center's Board of Directors, please see the center director.

Monthly board meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 6:30pm and are open to any current staff or family member of Northfield Montessori. Family and staff members will be allowed to speak during the public comments portion of the meeting and observe the remaining agenda. You are always welcome to attend with a concern, question, or to simply audit the meeting. Please refer to the monthly calendar or weekly administration email for any schedule changes or special meeting notices.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Open Door Policy: Partnering together in close community is a result of the important work we do, and honoring one another is deeply valued at Northfield Montessori. However, we know that misunderstandings or conflicts can arise from time to time. Please know the team, board, and administration all believe that if you are experiencing discord, we want to know and seek to better understand. We believe this approach will allow for the quickest resolution possible.

Formal Grievance Procedure: First, the family should discuss the concern directly with the staff member in question in an attempt to resolve the conflict at hand. If the concern is related to a center policy, operational practices, or licensing rule, please see the center director. Such constructive criticism shall be both given and received in an open and respectful manner. Resolution of conflicts is much more likely if both parties feel heard and are actively involved in the resolution process.

If not resolved, then:

- The family discusses the problem with the Center Director and submits a written grievance form (available from the Center Director or on the center website) within five (5) working days of the problem.
- If the individual is not satisfied with the Director's response, s/he may then submit a written grievance form (available from the Center Director or on the center website) to the Northfield Montessori Board Executive Committee with a copy to the Director, within five (5) working days of the discussion with the Director. Upon receipt of the formal board grievance, an assigned Executive Team member has fifteen (15) working days to investigate the complaint and respond

to the grievance with their final decision.

In all cases, it is Northfield Montessori's intent that grievances be handled in an expeditious manner as possible.

If no satisfactory resolution has been achieved, the individual may appeal the grievance to the full Board of Directors of Northfield Montessori. The decision of the Board of Directors will be final.

RESEARCH AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Written permission will be obtained from the parent before a child is involved in educational research, public relations activities, or social media while the child is at the center. For families who wish to not have their child participate in research or public relations at any time, there is a form found in the enrollment packet.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER

Northfield Montessori admits children of any race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, status with regard to public assistance, disability, or any other protected category under state or federal law, to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to children at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of any race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, status with regard to public assistance, disability, or any other protected category under state or federal law, in administration of its educational policies.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Northfield Montessori has no liability for incidents which may occur in the course of private arrangements made between a parent and a Northfield Montessori employee. Northfield Montessori discourages parents from engaging in any discussions or agreements with Northfield Montessori staff members about employment that would interfere or conflict with their employment status at Northfield Montessori, including but not limited to child care.

INSURANCE

General liability insurance is carried through Heartman Insurance Agency in Northfield.