

INTRODUCTION

We welcome your child and your family to our Montessori community. We feel privileged to be a part of your lives. This handbook will help foster the best possible communication between the school and the home.

This booklet provides important information on school policies and programs. Please read it carefully, keep it handy for reference, and call us if you have any further questions or concerns. We may, from time to time, need to change a policy.

History

Foothills Montessori school was founded in the home of our Director-Leanne Jorgensen. It has grown in seven years from 16 students to a full school of over 300 students ranging in ages from 3-14 years old.

Description

We currently have 10 classrooms servicing preschool through eighth grade. We offer a wide variety of enrichment courses and have a beautiful and rich outdoor environment as well as a library and office area.

Commitment

Foothills Montessori School was founded to be a world-class private school using the Montessori method. We constantly strive toward this goal guided by our mission and our four pillars. Our program is a cohesive and comprehensive program and our environment set up to foster respect for the individual child and a sense of community that brings out the best in individuals.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Mission Statement

The purpose of Foothills Montessori School is to provide an educational environment which serves the whole child – intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, cultivates a life-long love of learning and inspires a passion for excellence, makes it possible for children to learn to their highest potential, and nurtures the curiosity, creativity, and imagination born within us all.

Our School Rests on Four Pillars:

1. Excellence – the desire and commitment of doing ones best in every possible area of life.
2. Universal Values – habits and ways of thinking and acting which exhibit deeply held values including honesty, integrity, responsibility, compassion, peacefulness, respect for self and others, and a love of community.
3. Global Perspective – understanding, extensive knowledge, and respect for our world and all those in it.

4. Service – a lifelong commitment to giving something back through service to others.

Essential Elements of a Quality Montessori Program

- Montessori schools are based on the principles of respect and independence.
- Montessori programs teach children to think and discover for themselves.
- Children and teachers work in a carefully prepared environment.
- Curriculum is organized into a spiral of integrated studies.
- Montessori materials are a road from the concrete to the abstract.
- Montessori schools give children the sense of belonging to a family and help them live with other people.
- Multi-age classrooms foster a sense of collaboration and mentoring among students. Older students are encouraged to be role models for younger ones.
- Montessori teachers incorporate a second language, music, movement and art into the curriculum.
- Montessori teachers are college graduates with Montessori Certification.
- Montessori teachers have the ability to work with children of different learning styles.
- Montessori teachers strive to awaken the child's spirit and imagination, and encourage a normal desire for independence.
- Montessori teachers help the child learn how to observe, question and explore ideas independently.
- Montessori teachers help develop the kindness, courtesy, and respect that will help the child become a member of society.

-Montessori teachers rarely present a lesson to more than a handful of children at one time and limit their lessons to brief, efficient presentations.

-Montessori parents value an educational system that reaches the whole child.

-Montessori parents participate in the education of their child, and support the school community.

-Montessori parents enhance the school philosophy of respect for the child by using it in their home.

Maria Montessori

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was the first female medical doctor in Italy. Dr. Montessori was responsible for treating and caring for a group of low-income children in Rome. It was there that she founded the first “Casa de Bambini”. Through her deep respect for children and her outstanding skill of observation, she created a child-centered method of education. Today Montessori schools are highly regarded throughout the world.

CURRICULUM

We offer children a carefully prepared environment, rich in learning materials and experiences. Students are grouped in mixed-age classes (3-6yrs), (6-9 yrs), (9-12 yrs), and (12-14 yrs) that allow them to interact with each other on a variety of levels. The teacher is a facilitator in the learning process. Through careful observation and guidance, children are directed toward meaningful activity, which helps them discover and develop their own interests and abilities.

In all grade levels children follow an enhanced Montessori Curriculum which includes:

Language	Botany	Arts
Mathematics	Zoology	Music
Geometry	Science	Foreign Language
Geography	Practical Life	Computer Literacy
History	Environmental	Peace Education
World Cultures	Education	Physical Education

Primary Program

The Primary program consists of five main areas:

1. The Practical Life area helps children develop order, concentration, coordination, and independence in the care of self and the environment.
2. The Sensorial area offers children a chance to develop their sensory acuteness with materials relating to color, size, shape, sound, smell and touch.
3. Language Arts activities include pre-reading activities, vocabulary development and introduction to reading and writing.
4. The Math area provides concrete and manipulative materials through which the children discover the meaning of quantity, gain an overview of the number system and learn mathematical operations.
5. In Geography, History, Botany, and Zoology the children explore the physical, cultural, and natural worlds.

Also included are art, music, movement and foreign language. Communication, grace, courtesy, problem solving and other social skills are integrated throughout the curriculum.

Spanish Immersion

We currently offer a 50/50 dual language Spanish Immersion Program for the primary age group 3-6 and lower elementary age group 6-9. This program allows children to receive 50% of their lessons in Spanish and 50% of their lessons in English throughout the day.

Kindergarten

This class is an extension of the Primary Program for 5-6 year old children (5 years old by September 30th) who show academic and social readiness. These students have the opportunity to interact in the mixed-age group classroom in the morning class. In the afternoon, Kindergarten students work with their peers and have the opportunity to pursue academic and cultural subjects in greater depth.

Elementary & Middle School Program (Ages 6-14)

Through personalized instruction and planning, students are encouraged to pursue studies independently and take responsibility for their learning. They are encouraged to make choices and work cooperatively.

Curriculum follows state guidelines and includes Math, Language, Science, Geography, and History. The natural and cultural worlds are studied in depth. These students are refining their ability to obtain knowledge through research. The students develop an understanding of the relationship between all subjects. The students are also developing their capacities to move from concrete to abstract.

As part of the Montessori experience, students develop important interpersonal skills, become responsible members of a community and establish a code of conduct.

Classroom learning is enriched by field trips, guest speakers, theatrical productions, community service and other special events.

Computers

FMS provides technology resources and internet access to students and has taken precautions to restrict access to objectionable material. Our policies are intended to promote the most effective, safe, productive, and instructionally sound uses of networked information and communication tools. However, we cannot guarantee that the network will be without error. We expect students to exercise appropriate personal responsibility in their use of these resources including the following:

- Students may not email, chat, instant message, text, play games, access music/videos, or visit social network sites i.e. myspace, facebook, etc.
- Students may not download software or change network settings and passwords.
- Students may not password protect files. Teachers may have access to student data at all times.
- Students may only use computers as related to the curriculum as assigned by FMS teachers and not for personal use.
- FMS has the right to look at any data, email, logs or files that exist on USB flash drives and hard drives without prior notice to users.

- Students may not copy, save, plagiarize, or redistribute copyrighted material.
- Students agree to notify a teacher immediately if they mistakenly access inappropriate information.
- Parents will be held financially responsible for any intentional damage to FMS laptops, computers, network, etc. including vandalism, downloading viruses/worms, etc.

Upper Elementary and Middle School students (4th-8th grade) may bring a personal laptop to school for their use with a signed release from a parent. They are not to be shared with other students and must have appropriate firewall, parental controls, and active antivirus software. Personal laptop use on campus falls under the aforementioned policies and user guidelines. FMS is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal property and is the sole responsibility of the student.

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

First Day

The first day of school is an important experience in the child's life. His or her adjustment to this new environment depends in a large part on the attitudes of the parents, and their awareness of the program and its goals. Here are a few ways to ease the transition.

It is best to avoid excessive discussion about starting school. The child should feel it would be a normal and natural part of his or her growth and an extension of home life. If parents are calm and positive in their approach, the child will sense this, which will help ease the transition into this new experience.

Upon arrival, bring your child into the classroom entry where you will be greeted by one of the teachers. It is best to leave promptly after saying your good-byes. Parents should have a matter-of-fact attitude, which gives the child greater security. It is best to show confidence in the staff. Most children have separation problems on the first days, and sometimes weeks of school. Try not to be too anxious about this, realizing that children need time to bond with the other children, the teachers, and the environment. The teacher will give you an accounting during the first weeks of your child's day.

Phasing In

New primary students are normally “phased in” to the classroom. This eases the transition to the new environment. Returning students will start school first and re-familiarize themselves with the classroom. New students will start the second week of school, a few each day. This allows the teachers to give more individual attention to each child on their first day and gives them a classroom full of role models.

Social Situations

The developing and refining of social skills is part of the opportunity of school and an important part of the child’s work. The teachers are there to assist this process. During the year children may become involved in friendships that form triangles, or have difficulty with a particular child. If you feel a situation of this type may be causing problems, please contact us so we can attempt to help the child through the transition period of making friends and practicing conflict resolution strategies.

When a student leaves mid year, it is of real benefit to the child and his/her classmates to make arrangements to say goodbye. All children are made to feel they are part of our “family” at school. When a child leaves, the other children frequently wonder what happened to their classmate.

Often the atmosphere of a school is influenced by a few wonderfully positive people. Unfortunately, the opposite can also be true. Please remember that the children are influenced by our attitudes. If you have a problem or concern, please go to the source and discuss it with them directly in order to resolve it. Please use discretion and refrain from negative discussions and criticism in front of parents and children. Above all, we ask that you never speak negatively of your child or any other child within his/her earshot. If you are concerned about your child’s development or behavior, please talk with the child’s teacher without the child present. If you need to speak to the child about something of this nature, it is best to do so out of earshot of others. As you know, children are sensitive beings, as we all are, and should be treated with ultimate respect and dignity, even when being taught better ways of behaving.

Talking With Your Child About School

Parents of primary and elementary age children are frequently frustrated when they receive no response to the question “what did you do today?” Children do many activities throughout the day and it is sometimes difficult to articulate them. Also, Montessori typically emphasizes the process over the product, especially in the primary program. One strategy may be to ask something specific like “did you cut carrots today, or did you work with the bead chains?” Another suggestion is to ask about closing circle or end of day activities and work backward. In addition, you might find that after an hour or more at home the child may spontaneously share something from the day. This is especially true if he/she does not perceive talking about school as opening up the opportunity for criticism or pressure. We also encourage parents to schedule a classroom observation, from which you will come away with greater insight of your child’s day.

DAILY PROCEDURES

School Hours

Program	Begin	End
Preschool Half Day AM	8:30 AM	11:15 AM
Preschool Half Day PM	12:15 PM	3:00 PM
Preschool Full Day & Kindergarten	8:30 AM	3:00 PM
Elementary Full Day (1 st – 3 rd)	8:15 AM	3:15 PM
Elementary Full Day (4 th – 6 th)	8:15 AM	3:30 PM
Middle School (7 th – 8 th)	8:15 AM	3:30 PM
Extended Day	7:00 AM	6:00 PM
Lunch Bunch	11:15 AM	12:15 PM

Arrival and Departure

Saying “goodbye” tips for young children:

Initially it can be difficult for parents of young children to separate at the beginning of the school year. We have found that a short and positive good-bye is easiest for the child. We do not recommend parents entering the classroom. Prolonged or inconsistent goodbyes often make the separation more difficult. The school attempts to call all parents of upset children when the child has settled down. You may also feel free to call the school for reassurance that your child has settled in and is adjusting well.

Early Care:

The time before school should be a period of calmness. We suggest allowing plenty of time so as not to rush your child. Parents and children arriving between 7:00 am and 8:15 am should only be those who are using the extended care service. If you are using this service please park your car, walk your child to the designated classroom and sign them in. You will be greeted by a staff member.

Primary:

Please park in the designated parking area. Walk your child in, holding his/her hand through the parking lot. Inside the classroom door the teacher will greet your child and have you sign him/her in. This is the best time for you to say your good-byes. If each day is consistent the child feels more comfortable. It is also best to discuss how your departure will be handled beforehand so your child knows what to expect. We have found that when children are walked in and out by their parents, the transitions are gentler, more child-friendly, and begin the day in a more positive manner. Students with siblings in the Elementary program may arrive at 8:15. We thank you for taking the time to escort your child to his/her classroom.

Only in cases of extenuating circumstances, we will provide curbside drop-off and pick-up. An application for this service is provided in the registration packet and is subject to approval by the Director.

Elementary & Middle School:

Please either walk your child into class in the morning or drop them off curbside and watch him/her pass through the gates. Your child should then be able to safely walk to his or her classroom where the teachers will be waiting.

We will provide curbside pick-up for elementary students as of the first day of school on the east side of the facility (Stephanie Street). Curbside pick-up will be between 3:15-3:25 pm only for 1st through 3rd grade and 3:30-3:40 pm only for 4th through 8th grade. If your child is tardy (after 8:15a.m.) you must come into the office and get a tardy slip to take to your child's teacher.

Other Important Tips

1. Since the teachers are greeting the children and helping them to begin their day, it is not an appropriate time to converse extensively with your child's teacher.

2. If you wish to speak with a teacher, leave a message at the office or send a note asking for an appointment, but refrain from the practice of conversing for more than a few moments with the staff members while they are in contact with the children. Lengthy conversations distract the staff members who need to be giving 100% of their attention to the children. The staff members will be happy to respond promptly.
3. When picking up your child, please do not encourage him/her to continue to play on the playground while you wait. This is confusing to the staff with regard to safety and supervision (i.e. "Who is watching the child?"). Children should be picked-up and signed out from their classrooms promptly unless you are utilizing extended care services.
4. Please watch your child(ren) carefully at all times when on campus.

Extended Care

Children who attend the extended day program will be escorted to a designated room at the end of the day and signed into the program by their teacher. Picking your child up from extended care requires walking into the building and signing your child out on the extended day sign in/out sheet. If your child does not normally utilize these services, a parent must notify the school in advance that your child will be attending aftercare.

Procedure for Releasing Children

Frequently, relatives or friends will come to pick up children. We will not release a child to anyone without permission from the parent. A note to this effect must be given to the office with a parent's signature, and identification must be shown. Only in an emergency situation can we take a notification of a change by telephone. Otherwise, the child will be released to a parent and/or authorized individuals listed on the emergency release form provided at the beginning of the year. Please note even if the person is listed on the form, he/she will have to show identification the first time he/she picks up the child. It is also helpful if the usual person who picks up the child would inform the teacher if there will be a change from the ordinary, even if the individual is listed on the emergency release. This helps the pick up process go more quickly and smoothly. If the child is in a car pool, all members must be listed on the emergency release form.

Attendance

All FMS students, even our youngest, are expected to attend school on a daily basis, arriving before the start of the school day. Consistent attendance and prompt arrival are essential. Late arrival is disruptive and inconsiderate to the rest of the class, and nothing can be more disruptive to a child's education than irregular attendance. Consistency and routine are important to every child's development, including preschool students. We depend on our families' full support in this area. Students and parents who are often arriving late or frequently absent from school will need to meet with the Director to work out a solution or withdrawal may be required.

Absences

It is important for the school to know if your child is ill, if the illness is communicable, if your child is taking a day off, or if you are taking a vacation. Frequent absences impede children's academic progress and cause children to miss important experiences. Please call absences in to the office (407-0790) by 9:00a.m.

All students should bring a note upon returning to the school explaining the reason for the absence. If parents know of an absence in advance, such as a vacation or scheduled medical procedure, parents should pre-arrange the absence by sending a written note to the teacher.

Approved absences are those that have followed the above procedure. Kindergarten, Elementary and Middle School children should not have more than 20 absences per academic school year (10 per semester). Unless otherwise approved by the Director, students who exceed these guidelines may be withdrawn from FMS, lose preferred enrollment status and/or not advance to the next level. This policy allows us to do all we can to insure that each child grows and learns to his/her potential. Absences will be noted on all report cards. Excessive tardiness will also be noted.

Elementary and Middle School students begin instruction promptly at 8:15a.m. Therefore, we recommend students to arrive no later than 8:10a.m. to allow ample time for them to put away their personal items and get ready for their lessons. Primary students should arrive in class no later than 8:30a.m. Valuable experience is lost for everyone if your child is late for class. Please be on time.

Parking Lot Procedures

Please enter at the Amador Lane entrance if you are parking at the front of the facility. Enter at the Stephanie Street entrance to park on the east side of the campus or you are assigned to curbside service at the side gate entrance. All vehicles should exit onto Amador Lane. When dropping off your child please park if you are walking him or her in, do not stop at the curb or park in the thruway. The curb is for quick pick-up and drop-off only, and not for parking of any kind. Unattended vehicles are subject to ticketing by the City of Henderson. Please drive slowly and cautiously through the parking lot. Please hold your child's hand in the parking lot.

CLOTHING

Primary

Clothing for school should be comfortable and help create a feeling of independence in your child. All clothing should be easy for the child to remove. We encourage parents to place the responsibility of choosing clothes on the child. We suggest that you have the child make choices about clothing and outerwear the night before. This will make your mornings go much more smoothly.

Footwear is especially important. It is difficult and unsafe for children to run, climb, or walk in flip flops, clogs, backless shoes, and shoes with heels. Therefore, we ask that you refrain from sending your children in these types of shoes. Additionally, all children who would like to work in the outdoor environment and/or utilize the exploratorium must wear closed toe shoes.

Primary children will need a plastic zip-lock bag containing a change of clothing (2 pair of underwear, socks, shirt, and pants). All clothing must be well labeled with the student's name. Also, label the bag with a permanent marker with your child's name.

We ask parents to give careful consideration to the clothing being worn. Avoid clothing that depicts current popular cartoon and movie characters especially those that could encourage aggressive behavior. This type of clothing is often a distraction to other children at school. Our goal, to provide an environment that encourages respect for each other, cooperation and concentration, is best served without these types of influences.

We do allow the children to bring slippers with rubber soles from home to change into while working in the classroom. If your child would like to do this, you must label the slippers carefully, and leave them at school to be kept in the child's cubby.

Elementary & Middle School

Students need to dress in a way that is conducive to learning and P.E. activities. FMS reserves the right to determine if any hair or clothing style is distracting or inappropriate. The following guidelines help keep the focus on learning rather than what someone is wearing:

- No clothing that depicts negative, distracting or inappropriate messages.
- No flip-flops or high-heel shoes. Tennis or athletic shoes must be worn on physical education days in order to participate in P.E.
- No sleeveless shirts, spaghetti straps, see-through or low cut shirts. Tank top straps should be 3 finger widths.
- No visible body piercing other than earrings.
- No distracting hair-dye or styles (such as bright purple, mohawks, etc.) – hair must be a natural color.
- No bare midriffs.
- No cut-offs or jeans with holes or rips.
- No shorts or skirts shorter than fingertip length.
- No accessories (watches, belts, etc.) that can be construed as a game, toy or otherwise inappropriate object.

Students who come to school in any of the above will be sent home to change their clothes. Repeated dress code violations may result in withdrawal from the program. Students are welcome to bring rubber soled slippers (marked with their name) to change into during work time.

FOOD

Foothills Montessori School is committed to teaching the whole child, which requires us to take nutrition very seriously. The snack that is provided at the school will be nutritious and wholesome. If your child has a food allergy or food sensitivity, please inform the child's teacher in writing prior to the first day of school. Also, indicate all allergies on the Emergency Form provided in the registration packet.

Once the primary children are ready, they will be preparing their own snack. Some children will prefer to continue working rather than having a snack, therefore, please make sure your child has an ample breakfast.

Elementary and middle school students may bring an individual daily snack that should be of a nutritious value and does not interfere with the student's ability to continue with their work.

We strongly encourage nutritional lunches. Things to avoid are artificial flavoring, excessive amounts of salt and fat, preservatives (BHA, BHT), and excessive amounts of refined sugar. **Please do not send Lunchables and snack items that list sugar as one of the first few ingredients. No candy bars or sodas will be allowed.** Lunches should be packed with an ice pack. Please don't send items in glass containers for the safety of the children. It is best to pack items in reusable plastic containers.

Having your child help you prepare their lunch the night before will help him/her have positive feelings for the food packed. Discuss the nutritional value of each item and perhaps where it comes from or how it is made. Finger foods are especially helpful for younger children, such as fruit cut in bite size pieces, or carrots or green pepper strips. We suggest that parents try to keep the experience positive and allow for limited choices.

Some other ideas include:

Yogurt	Salad	Fruit
Sandwiches	Vegetables	Leftovers

All uneaten foods, which can be contained, will be sent home. You will want to monitor your children's lunch boxes to see what they like and dislike.

As a part of our curriculum of grace and courtesy, we ask that each child in the school bring a cloth napkin with his or her lunch. We actively teach manners and appreciate your support in this area.

HEALTH

Health Immunizations

Foothills Montessori School is required to follow Nevada State Law regarding immunizations of all students. Immunizations must be com-

pleted prior to attending any public or private school or preschool.

Health records/immunization copies must be on file with the school prior to attending class.

State law does provide exemptions for religious or medical reasons. Please contact the office for further information regarding exemption.

Illnesses and Emergencies

If an illness or emergency arises we will attempt to contact a responsible party. We will follow these procedures:

- a. Your child will be taken to an area away from the other children.
- b. A parent or responsible party will be contacted to pick up the child within 45 minutes.
- c. We require three telephone numbers to call in case your child gets sick or there is an emergency. Usually the numbers are for their parents and a relative or a friend. Some parents have occupations where it is difficult to be contacted and/or leave on short notice. If you have such a job, please provide the names of individuals who have the flexibility to pick up your child.
- d. If a serious illness or emergency occurs and we are unable to reach a responsible party, we will contact your personal physician, or if necessary, call an ambulance or other emergency service. It is absolutely imperative that you keep the school up to date on any changes in telephone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

If your child has any of the following indications, he/she is not healthy enough to attend school.

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Deep coughing
- Yellow or green nasal or eye discharge
- Upset stomach
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Unidentified rash

If your child has one or more of these symptoms, ***please keep him/her home***. If a child exhibits any of these symptoms at school, a parent will be notified to make arrangements to pick up the child from

school. The child may return to school after he/she is symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours. We are aware that this can be a real burden. However, it not only makes the child comfortable, but also prevents exposure to the rest of the students and staff.

Given the nature of children, accidents will happen. Hopefully, they will always be minor bumps and bruises. In the event of an accidental injury, the staff member present will care for the child and notify other staff members and the administration. In the event of a serious accident, the family of the child is notified and arrangements are made for the child to be taken from the school. In an extreme emergency, we will call 911. For all accidents of more than a very minor nature, an incident report will be completed and signed by the attending staff member and the parent. The report will be kept in the child's file and parents will be given a copy.

Medication

Schools are required to follow stringent procedures concerning medications to be administered at school. They are as follows:

1. All non-prescription medication must be accompanied by a note from the doctor stating the times, dosages, and length of treatment. **This includes over the counter medication.**
2. Prescription medication must remain in the container bearing the original label that shows the prescription number, name of medication, date filled, physician's name, child's name, expiration date, and directions for dosage. **Medication may only be administered one time per day (lunchtime) per Child Care Licensing.**
3. A release from a parent stating that Foothills Montessori School has your permission to administer medication (form available in the office).
4. **All medications should be handed from a parent to an office staff member and enclosed in an appropriate container. Do not give medications to your child's teacher.**
5. Whenever possible, we prefer that the parent administer nebulizer treatments before school or make arrangements to come to the school and administer the treatments.
6. Parents must check and confirm the medical dosage sheet in the office and discuss any problems with the staff member in charge.

Naps

Full-time preschool children, other than kindergarteners, are offered the opportunity to nap. All nap and rest periods are provided in a quiet area separate from the children engaged in activities which would disrupt the peaceful environment. Children who are nappers rest on cots during naps, and must remain on the cot until they have completed a nap or have rested quietly for twenty minutes. Children whose parents wish them to nap should bring a blanket from home. A “comfort item” such as a stuffed animal is also permitted for nappers. These supplies are kept at the facility and sent home every weekend or as needed, for washing.

Toilet Mastery

Our licensing requirements preclude us from having any children in our care that have not acquired toilet mastery. Included in this mastery is the ability to care for them self after using the toilet. Please dress children so they are confident they can succeed.

Emergency Disaster Plan

Foothills Montessori School has developed appropriate plans to respond in an emergency including fire or natural disaster. Fire Drills are conducted and recorded monthly. A drill for natural disasters is conducted and recorded quarterly.

CPR Training

All staff members of Foothills Montessori School have received training and certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid.

No Smoking and No Alcohol Policy

Smoking and the use of alcohol is strictly prohibited at all times in the classrooms, on the campus/parking lot, and on field trips (local or long distance) of Foothills Montessori School.

Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

State law requires that any staff member who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neg-

lect, or who has observed a child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which could reasonably result in abuse or neglect, shall immediately report to the Department of Human Services, or the local law enforcement agency.

SHARING

Occasionally, children may bring treasures that are important to them to share with the class. These may include objects from nature, such as shells or rocks, something they have made, or a cultural item. Please keep toys at home. If your child brings a toy to school, please tell him/her that toys must stay at home or in the car. Toys at school are a disruption in many ways. If you have questions about the appropriateness of an item, please check with your child’s teacher before sending the item with your child in order to avoid disappointment on the part of the child. Sharing policies such as days or times will be explained by individual teachers during the first month of school.

Personal Property

Foothills Montessori assumes no responsibility for any items brought from home. We ask that you leave fragile materials at home so that they will be better protected. There is a Lost and Found box maintained in the front office. This will be placed at the gate periodically. Please check it for any items you may be missing. All items in the Lost and Found box not picked up will be sent to a charitable organization, typically once a month.

Please do not allow students to bring electronic devices to school which include cell phones, iPods, hand held computer games, etc. These items are distracting to the work environment and will be taken from the student if used during class and/or school hours. Items will be held by the teacher for the parent to pick-up if confiscated by a staff member and will not be returned directly to the student. However, students may keep cell phones in their back packs for after school use but must remain off during school hours and not be in use. FMS is not liable in anyway and assumes no responsibility for lost electronic devices and personal property of the student.

BIRTHDAYS

Your child’s birthday is an important time and a learning experience for everyone. We invite parents to join us for circle time on this special

day (first 20 minutes of the day). For birthdays that fall on the weekend, the following Monday will be the day of the child's celebration. If you are unable to attend on the scheduled day, and would like to arrange a different time or day, please contact your child's teacher.

Summer birthdays are usually celebrated in May and the child's teacher will announce specific dates for these celebrations.

For primary birthdays we will have an activity called "The Circle of the Sun". We ask that the week before your child's birthday you send in photographs of your child - one for each year of his/her life. Each child will make a time line of his/her life. This time line goes home with the child within a few days. We also ask that parents write a short biographical sketch of the birthday child. If possible, we ask for the derivation of the child's name, national origin, meaning, or why you chose it. Also, we ask that you provide a short paragraph for each year of your child's life. You might include where your child lived, if a sibling arrived during that year, a special trip that was taken, or a special event or accomplishment. For example "When Sara was three we moved to Las Vegas. When Sara was four, her new baby sister arrived. Sara thought she was too small" et cetera. Please try to keep the paragraphs to one to three sentences each. The child will carry the globe around the sun as the year's events are read for each year of his/her life.

Often children will like to share a food on their birthday. An item to be shared for snack is welcome, but we ask that it be nutritious. Examples might be bagels, a special bread, a baked item like muffins, or a food that represents a cultural or national origin of the child or someone he/she knows. Please check with the child's teacher before sending any food items to share. Please no gifts, sweets, or goodie bags.

Some parents have asked if they can give some item of use to the school on the child's birthday. Although you should not feel you need to give anything, if you would like to share something, books are always welcome. The Director has special nameplates to place inside the book to acknowledge the giver and the occasion for the donation.

Difficulties and hurt feelings can occur when birthday invitations are passed out at school. Unless every child in the class is being invited, please send birthday invitations by mail. Please do not ask the child's teacher to pass out invitations or put them in the cubbies if all children are not invited.

PARENT / SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Foothills Montessori School strives to be in partnership with parents in the education of their children. We will strive to keep communication lines open between the parent and the school.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held in the fall and spring. It is essential that all parents, preferably both mother and father, attend conferences.

Newsletter

You will receive the school's newsletter periodically during the school year. Each teacher contributes a section, and articles that may be of interest are also included. These newsletters will also include information on upcoming school events such as parent nights, school festivals, holidays, and field trips.

Parent Nights

Parent Nights will be held throughout the year. Issues such as discussing Montessori Philosophy and parenting materials are sometimes presented. This is an excellent chance to expand your knowledge of how your child learns and how you can carry this philosophy into your home. Other times there is an Open House format followed with your child acting as a guide to his/her classroom. Parents are expected to support school events and parent nights and to make every effort to attend.

Library

FMS has a school library for the children's use. The school maintains a reference library on Montessori Child Development, and parenting issues. Interested parents may check out books for a 2 week period. The library has very limited resources so parents should take ultimate care of the books checked out to them and insure their safe return. If books are overdue for more than 30 days a \$5.00 charge is assessed. Lost or damaged books must be replaced by the parent.

Parent Involvement

All parents enrolling their children in FMS agree to involve themselves in their children's education by attending all Parent/Teacher conferences and by attending Parent Education Night and school events. Parents are expected to enforce all homework policies and ensure required assignments are completed and paperwork returned.

Parent Volunteers

We strongly encourage every parent to volunteer in one way or another so that all feel like a part of our school community. We will do our best to come up with creative and broad opportunities for involvement so that there will be "something for everyone". Involvement does not need to be extensive or time consuming to be meaningful to you and your child. Often just the sharing of an experience, cultural information, travel experiences, or career expertise at circle time can enrich the children's learning. This allows parents to add so much to our school. We also have a Parent/Teacher Organization which helps build community, supports the teachers, and conducts fundraising for the school. The PTO always encourages involvement and offers a wide variety of opportunities. Parents volunteering in the classroom and/or library must attend on-site training held at the beginning of the school year.

Visitors

All adult visitors to the school, including parents of enrolled students, must come to the office and sign in unless at pick-up and drop-off times. Visitors will be given a badge to wear which lets all staff know they have checked in at the office. Visitors who are not wearing a badge will be asked to go to the office to sign in.

On occasion friends, relatives, and former students ask to visit the school during school hours. Although we strive to have a warm and welcoming campus, this can be very distracting to the learning environment. All visits must receive prior approval from the administration, and, except under rare circumstances, will only be approved for the end of the school day. No drop in visitors will be allowed.

Observation

Our doors are always open and we encourage you to visit the school. We ask that each parent observe a classroom at least once a year.

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Formal observations do not begin until after the first six weeks of school and are not scheduled the week before a major holiday. You may call the office to schedule an observation time. Please check in at the office any time you visit the school before proceeding to your child's class. It is important that we are aware of all adults on campus at all times. We will give you a visitor badge and observation guideline sheet upon checking in. This is for the safety of our students and keeps the disruption of the work cycle to a minimum.

Field Trips

Your child will have the opportunity to go on field trips. The parents' written parental permission slip, signed during registration, is used for the entire year. Parents will be advised about trips involving transportation off premises usually provided by chartered buses, but on rare occasion by parent owned vehicles. The notice will give complete details. Parent owned vehicles must be covered by private liability insurance and parents must have a current driver's license and proof of insurance in their car or possession. Each driver will have a list of the children being transported in their car with the names and phone numbers of parents and or guardians. The driver of the privately owned vehicle and all passengers must wear seat belts or be in car seats if required by law. In addition, parent chaperones must sign up at least one day in advance of the field trip with their child's teacher as space is typically limited.

In the event you do not want your child to participate in any field trip, the school will make every effort to find classroom space. If no such space is available, it may be necessary to keep your child home. There is no reduction of tuition for this absence. Children who arrive late for trips will remain in the office or in another classroom until their class returns. No transportation will be provided to and from school.

School Directory

We distribute a school Directory in October of each school year. All parents/students who have agreed to be in the Directory will be listed unless an objection is on file.

Who To Ask?

We have listed areas of responsibility and specific individuals to address inquiries. We hope this will be helpful.

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Classroom questions, events, information regarding your child's progress, class curriculum questions - your child's teacher

Tours, minor concerns, phone calls, messages, minor questions, upcoming events – Front Desk Assistant

Admissions, tuition information, enrollment availability, questions concerning your child's paperwork, medicine disbursement, overall school policy and procedures - Karen Kolb, Administrator

Licensing, marketing – Angela Drew, Marketing & PR Coordinator

Fund raising, events, studio programs, PTO liaison - Kim Gallagher, Event & Fundraising Coordinator

Parent Teacher Organization - PTO President Teresa Bounassi

Curriculum (concerns after going through the classroom teacher) - Denise Crosby, Curriculum Director

School development - Leanne Jorgensen, Head of School/Director

Social Networking

Students and parents using social network sites at any time and in any place are not to mention classmates, families, teachers, staff or administration of Foothills Montessori School in a negative manner or to talk in a derogatory way about the school and/or its' families. Sites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc. Please also refrain from being critical, judgmental, and infringing on others privacy. Doing so may result in suspension or withdrawal from the school.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Admission

Foothills Montessori School accepts children age 3 years through 14 years. We admit students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to all students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of our educational policies, admission policies, and other school administered programs.

Tuition

Tuition is based on the entire academic year. No refunds will be given if a child is sick, or time is missed because of vacations. A financial agreement must be signed before your child is enrolled, accompanied by the **non-refundable annual registration fee of \$400.00**. Tuition is due in three payments. A nine-payment plan is available, payable in monthly installments; however, participation in the tuition insurance plan is mandatory. All payments are due on the first of the month. A late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed on any account that is not paid within ten days. A fee of \$25.00 will be assessed on all returned checks. **Student accounts 30 days past due may result in the child being withdrawn from the school.**

A Credit Card Authorization Form is provided in the registration packet. All parents must have a valid credit card authorization on file. You have the option to make automatic payments via the card on file. Please note that we cannot accept American Express, but do accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. You may also opt to have tuition payments automatically deducted from the bank account of your choice by signing up for ACH. **Please note any account 10 days in arrears will automatically be charged to the credit card account in addition to a \$25.00 late fee.** Parents electing to pay their tuition in full by August 1st do not have to complete this form.

Withdrawal from the school requires at least one month's advance written notice. You must continue tuition payments for the entire school year unless participating in the tuition insurance plan which will cover a portion of the outstanding tuition. There is no refund of any tuition for the school year and parents will be obligated for tuition for the balance of the year. Please note that all the above forfeit registration, activities, materials, Spanish immersion, and enrollment fees. In addition to tuition, a yearly activities and materials fee is required. This fee will be used to cover the cost of field trips, yearbooks, transportation, workbooks/text books, classroom materials, etc. and is due and payable at the beginning of the school year.

Court Costs/Costs of Collection

If, after normal channels of collection are followed, we are forced to refer your account for collection, you will pay the cost of collection, including but not limited to, attorney's fees.

Admissions Process

Upon receipt of application, birth certificate, non-refundable application fee, and previous school records, parents will be contacted to schedule an interview. The decision to accept the child for a particular program is made after interviews are conducted. Upon acceptance an acceptance letter and financial agreement will be provided. This agreement is to be returned with the non-refundable registration fee of \$4000.00. Prior to attending, a registration packet will be provided. This includes enrollment forms, annual calendar, emergency contact information, health requirements, and other information.

Student Files

Each student will need to have a completed file within the first week of school. This includes:

- Application
- Signed Financial Agreement and Enrollment Contract
- Credit Card Authorization Form
- Emergency Form
- Copy of Immunizations with all shots being current or appropriate waivers
- Copy of the Child's Birth Certificate
- Any previous school records
- Field Trip Permission Slip
- Pre-Admission Physical Exam Sheet
- Permission to Release Information
- Child Care Licensing Statement (primary students only)
- Parent Handbook Receipt

Re-Enrollment Procedures

Re-enrollment takes place in February. Students already enrolled in the program are given the opportunity to re-enroll before new students are admitted. Elementary students must submit an application for re-admission each year and receive a letter of acceptance before they can be re-enrolled. Acceptance to the primary program does not guarantee acceptance into the elementary program. Siblings of students already in the program are given second priority. Open applications are accepted two weeks after re-enrollment is made available. Parents can request a class, but final decisions are given to the placement team: Director, Administrator and grade level teacher.

Termination of Contract

We, as a school, are committed to providing every opportunity for children to feel comfortable and make a positive adjustment to the classroom environment. At times this might include making a transfer to another classroom. However, there are times and circumstances when a child may be asked to leave. These situations may include:

- A child is not able to use the toilet facilities independently.
- A child is not making the adjustment to the classroom environment.
- It is determined that the needs of the child or the parent would be better served in another environment.
- A child is not making appropriate academic progress.
- A child is not doing assigned classroom work, homework, or fulfilling other requirements.
- A child or parent's behavior is inappropriate.
- A child is habitually late or absent.
- A child repeatedly violates the dress code.
- Tuition is not paid on a timely basis.

The Director, in counsel with parent, faculty, and at times appropriate professionals, will determine the course of action in these cases.

FMS reserves the right to terminate any students' enrollment at any time for any reason, not prohibited by law, if in FMS' sole judgment the student is not meeting the programs goals or standards or if we do not have adequate expertise or resources for the child's educational, medical, or other needs (subject to applicable regulatory requirements). FMS further reserves the right to decline enrollment/services to parents or guardians who, in FMS' sole judgment, are uncooperative, abusive to school staff, or, in FMS' opinion, will not be satisfied with FMS' best efforts.

Special Needs

Teachers are constantly alert to special needs that a student may have. It is important for parents to be aware that FMS is not a special needs school, and we do not have the resources to adequately service some special needs. If students appear to need possible intervention or additional help outside the range of a normal classroom environment in order to be successful over the short or long term, either academically or socially, the teacher refers the child to the Special Needs committee of the school. In conjunction with the

teacher, the Special Needs committee may hold a conference with the parents, sometimes requesting additional testing through Child Find or another applicable testing agency. When appropriate, we require that all students which appear to have special needs, or have special needs determined by applicable professionals submit to the following:

1. Review of re-enrollment on a semester to semester basis.
2. Parents must access, if determined necessary, a special assistant paid for by the parent, special classes or services through the Clark County School District or any other intervention that may be required. Parents must access and consistently use these additional resources determined to be needed in order for their child to remain enrolled in Foothills Montessori School. Parents must also follow up with all testing or resources in a timely manner.
3. All additional resources are the responsibility of the parents to access and to provide for both through transportation and financially.
4. FMS requires complete disclosure of known disabilities.
5. FMS requires access to helpful information regarding disabilities and/or support persons who the school can contact and who can contact the school without privacy clause restrictions.

Non-English Speaking Children

Children who are not yet able to speak English can sometimes do well in the classroom. However FMS limits the amount per classroom and requires the parents, upon acceptance, to sign that they will be willing to provide and pay for English tutoring at least weekly and perhaps more if the student appears to the teacher to need such tutoring in order to be successful.

Promotion From One Grade Level To The Next

Students at Foothills Montessori School work through the curriculum based on individual needs and abilities, and not based on grade level. As a result, the concept that a child is a first, second, or third grader doesn't have the same meaning as it would in a traditional school. However, we realize that children in our culture are accustomed to referring to themselves by their grade level. Furthermore, students transferring from our school will have a grade level determined for the purposes of placement. FMS has minimum expectations based on

those outlined in the Curriculum Essential Framework of the Clark County School District for the normal baseline achievement that we expect to see in our students. While they may surpass those standards, they represent a normal index of skills and knowledge that we expect most of our students to display. Students are normally promoted from one grade level to the next at the end of the school year if they have accomplished these norms. Advancement to the next level, however, can be adjusted based on social, emotional, or physical/motor development if FMS deems this necessary. Criteria such as work habits, independence, social adjustment, and maturity are also considered. We work with the parents in reaching these decisions, and our focus is on what is in the best needs of the individual child, while still considering the needs of the whole class.

Kindergarten students who are being retained do not take part in the "Moving Up" ceremony.

Students at Foothills Montessori School are rarely promoted to a grade level that a child of their age would not normally be in. However, in rare instances when an individual may benefit from advancement because of special needs and abilities, we do consider doing so. The teacher, Director, and often other staff members in the school are consulted as a part of this determination, as is the parent. If a child is advanced beyond his/her grade level, it must be understood that, if moving to another school, the admissions requirements of that school must be adhered to. Consequently, children who have been advanced a grade at FMS may be required, at a new school, to return to the grade level they would be in at that school based on their chronological age.

Transcripts

Student files are confidential and proprietary records kept secure. Parents have access to their child's file with a written request. Although transcripts including standardized test scores, immunization records and report cards may be copied for the parent by a staff member, no file can be taken off the premises of the school. If the parent disagrees with anything in the file a written note into the permanent file may be added with the parent's comments. All student report cards in the student's cumulative file as well as any student recommendations can only be sent through a written request from the parents. Copies are then sent directly to the entity requesting the records and are noted in the child's file. Report cards and transcripts cannot be issued if a student has an outstanding balance on his/her

account, or overdue library books or school materials are outstanding. Student records will be forwarded once the account has been brought up to date and/or items returned to FMS. In addition, all documentation regarding parent conferences, anecdotal records, behavior logs, sign in/out sheets, incident reports, and any other internal communication by the staff of FMS will only be released under court order.

BEHAVIOR PLAN

We strive for a calm and satisfying environment. Classroom rules center around respect for others and our school environment. Grace and courtesy are part of our curriculum. If a child has inappropriate or disruptive behavior the teacher will redirect the child to a different activity. Usually this is all that is needed. If the behavior continues the teacher will talk to the child involved and discuss and possibly practice the appropriate behavior. If the problem persists, the teacher isolates the child for a brief period of time away from working or being a part of the group. There is no special place for this in the room. Any chair, mat, or floor space serves the purpose.

Behavior considered unacceptable includes: overly aggressive reactions or behavior such as hitting, fighting, biting, hitting a staff member, throwing rocks, verbally abusing others, swearing, hiding or running from a staff member, stealing or defacing property, and speaking about inappropriate or lewd subjects or soliciting inappropriate acts (i.e. sexual discussions, kissing, etc). In such cases, the behavior is promptly reported to the Director and the parents are contacted to schedule a conference with their child's teacher to discuss ways to correct the behavior.

If the behavior continues, parents are asked to explore, with the assistance of the teacher, the reason for the child's inability to function within the school or on the playground. A decision is reached on how to handle any further disturbance or harmful activity. In some cases, it will be suggested that the parents seek professional guidance, and the child may be required to shorten his/her day. The child will be withdrawn from the school if the behavior continues.

Foothills Montessori School reserves the right to require withdrawal of any child if the teachers, Administrator, and Director determine the Foothills Montessori School environment is not a good placement or does not meet the needs of a particular child. Foothills Montessori School also reserves the right to require withdrawal in situations involving repeated violations of school rules. Any student who repeat-

edly breaks the ground rules, or who on even one occasion endangers the health and safety of others, may be asked to leave the school by the Administrator or Director.

Ground Rules

Respect for people and property is of utmost importance in a Montessori classroom. We expect a child to be courteous and respectful to both classmates and adults. Lessons in grace and courtesy are a part of our program. We encourage the parents to learn as much of Montessori's philosophy as possible so that they can assist the child in a positive manner.

1. We are kind and gentle to one another.
2. Everyone has a right to privacy and concentration. We do not disturb children who are trying to concentrate on their work.
3. We respect the personal belongings of others.
4. Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure. We do not express anger or upset feelings in a way that insults or threatens someone else.
5. Everyone has the right to be physically safe. We follow all policies and procedures so that this is accomplished.
6. We do not do anything that hurts or endangers anyone.
7. We do not allow fighting, pushing, tripping or use of any other aggressive behavior.
8. The playground equipment must be used as intended. We follow playground policies to ensure safety and comfort for all.
9. We do not play scary or chasing games with others when asked not to.
10. We keep sand in the sandbox, and never put it in the drinking fountains or sinks.
11. We do not throw sand.
12. We do not tackle one another, roughhouse, or play carelessly. We never touch other students without permission.
13. We do not encourage or allow hand holding, kissing, or other romantic displays of affection of any kind.
14. We keep sticks and stones on the ground and never throw them.
15. We do not leave campus without an adult, and never leave our teacher's supervision without permission. We only use the bathroom one at a time.
16. We take care of our school by never defacing property, by putting away our outside equipment such as balls or jump

ropes, and by caring for our environment within the classroom.

17. We respect our school policies and take responsibility for our education by working positively with our teachers, returning homework or other assignments, doing our best, and arriving promptly and attending regularly.
18. We do the required class work and give our best efforts to all we do.
19. We use computers, materials, equipment, and books as intended for educational purposes.
20. We do not text or email salacious or inappropriate material to our classmates.

These ground rules apply even if the child is being supervised for brief periods of time by their parents, such as at drop-off or pick-up times. Parents are expected to enforce these ground rules carefully and conscientiously whenever on campus or at a school sponsored event or field trip. These ground rules are actively taught, promoted, and enforced in a positive way. By holding ourselves to these high standards, we find that the best comes out in all of us. Although learning and growth is expected, children who fail to reasonably comply with these ground rules may be withdrawn from the program.

Mandatory Withdrawal for Behavioral Concerns

Behavioral concerns resulting in withdrawal of a student relate to any actions that significantly interfere with the optimum functioning of the classroom, cause regular disturbance of the school's routine or mission, or interfere in any way with another's right to a safe and academic environment. If a student has significant behavioral concerns, one or all of the following steps may be taken:

1. The child may be counseled by a teacher and appropriate consequences imposed.
2. The child may meet with the Head of School and his/her classroom teacher.
3. A conference or series of conferences may be held between the Director, classroom teachers, and the parents.
4. The child may be given a probationary period which will outline behavior modification guidelines and a specific time period for improvement.
5. The child may be required to work under controlled circumstances for a time period, commonly known as in-house suspension. This may involve accommodations such as the child working in an isolated area or a parent accompanying the child to school for a period of time.

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Although we strive to teach the whole child, allowing children opportunities to learn and mature, withdrawal may be required at any time at FMS' sole discretion.

Mandatory Withdrawal for Lack Of Academic Progress or Failure to Meet Program Standards

A lack of academic progress may occur for a variety of reasons and is usually characterized by a student progressing at a rate that is more than a semester behind standard traditional expectations for a grade level. A student may fail to meet program standards by habitually not turning in assigned work or repeatedly not meeting minimum expectations for work. Each situation is treated individually. In serious cases, determination on a course of action is made by a team of teachers which includes the classroom teachers, other professionals at the school, the Director and the child's parents. If a special need is suspected, every effort must be made by the parents to assist in the identification of the special need (see section on special needs for more information). FMS reserves the right to require additional tutoring for a student whose progress is of concern as part of an overall remedial plan. Although we strive to help each child reach his/her potential, withdrawal may be required for lack of academic progress or failure to meet program goals at any time at FMS' sole discretion.

Thank you for carefully reading this Handbook.

Following these guidelines and understanding school policies insures a smooth year for all of us, and a pleasant and safe environment for your child.

Have a great 2010-2011 school year!

FMS Parent Handbook -- revised July 2010



FOOTHILLS
Montessori School

PARENT HANDBOOK

1401 Amador Lane * Henderson, NV 89012
702.407.0790

www.foothillsmontessori.com

*Disclaimer: All policies and procedures may be subject to change at the sole discretion of the Administration of FMS without written or advance notice. This flexibility is necessary to respond to the needs of our students and staff and serve their best interests while preserving the integrity of our programs.

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