



# Parent Handbook

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October 28, 2022

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## Welcome to our School

Montessori School of Calgary is committed to advancing the development of the whole child within an Alberta Education accredited and Association Montessori Internationale based community. We support the academic, emotional, social and physical development of each child so they may become self-directed learners, flexible thinkers and creative problem solvers. This aligns with Alberta Education's 21st century learner who is an ethical citizen and engaged thinker with an entrepreneurial spirit.

The Montessori School of Calgary is a child-centered school with a holistic approach to education and proven high academic success. Within our nurturing environment, experienced guides and teachers support each child with trust and respect, with the goal of developing confident, resilient and responsible character formation.

In carefully prepared classrooms, children are grouped together in three-year age spans. They learn how to follow and then how to lead. Primary and elementary classes are multi-aged, multi-graded and are based on specific planes of child development. The primary program is for children aged 3-6, and the elementary program is for children aged 6-12.

### Our Goals

- To provide a child-centered holistic approach to education.
- To provide academic opportunities promoting confident, resilient, and responsible character formation.
- To provide a positive and inclusive environment where success of the whole child is supported by committed, confident and caring Montessori trained educators and Alberta certificated teachers.
- To provide an environment that supports the professional development of staff, which in turn supports the growth of the child.

## Accreditation & Governance

### Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Certification

As one of only two AMI certified schools in western Canada, Montessori School of Calgary is proud to be recognized by the Association Montessori Internationale, an organization founded by Maria Montessori herself. Today, AMI is the steward of the educational approach developed by Montessori 100 years ago.

### Leadership & Governance

The Montessori School of Calgary ensures long-term sustainability that embodies the core AMI Montessori principles. The administration continually examines policies and procedures that elevate our best-practices in all areas including health and safety, technology, regulatory requirements and professional development. MSofC moved from an individual-steward business model to a broader governance model and in April 2016, Montessori School of Calgary introduced a Board of Directors comprised of individuals from within our Montessori community as well as external stakeholders. All of our board members demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to AMI Montessori principles.

### Supporting our School – Charitable Status

Montessori School of Calgary is a registered charity (Registered B.N. 138876065 RR0001).

Donations to the school contribute to enhanced learning environments and experiences for our students and continued advancement of the vision of AMI Montessori learning. For information on how your support can make a difference at the Montessori School of Calgary, please contact Patti van Zeyl, Head of School at (403) 229-1011 or [patti.vanzeyl@msofc.ca](mailto:patti.vanzeyl@msofc.ca)

### Accountability

The Montessori School of Calgary is an accredited private school through [Alberta Education](#) and follows the Alberta Program of Studies within our AMI Montessori principles. The school receives some government funding and intends to maintain both AMI Montessori and Government of Alberta accreditation.

## Communication + Contact Information

School telephone number (403) 229-1011

Office Hours Monday – Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

### Key Contacts

Patti van Zeyl, Head of School  
[patti.vanzeyl@msofc.ca](mailto:patti.vanzeyl@msofc.ca)

Danielle Bechard, Executive Assistant to the Head of School  
[danielle.bechard@msofc.ca](mailto:danielle.bechard@msofc.ca)

MyMSofC - The Parent Zone portal is accessed through the school website.

## School Routines

### School Times

Primary Program A.M.	8:30 am – 11:30 am	The doors of the school open at 8:10 am for drop-off between 8:10-8:25am
Kindergarten	8:30 am – 3:30 pm	
Elementary Program	8:30 am – 3:30 pm	

### Start Dates & Times

Program and Grade Level	Start Dates
Extended Day (Kindergarten) Students	September 6 (8:30am-3:30pm)
Elementary Students	September 6 (8:30am-3:30pm)
Returning Half Day and Full Day Students	September 6 (8:30-11:30am)
New Half Day and Full Day Students	Staggered start* – Beginning from September 12 (8:30-11:30am/ 8:30-3:30pm) Specific dates determined by August 1

\*The purpose for the mid-to-late September start is to ensure a smooth transition into an already established Montessori community. Each start date is specific to individual families.

For other key dates and holidays, please consult the School Calendar available in the My MSofC Parent Zone.

## Academic Information

### The Primary Program

During the first years of the Montessori primary program, the child is learning to adapt to the new environment. This is achieved by working with the practical life and early sensorial activities. Through this, children learn self-discipline, independence and a joy of learning. Children will enjoy many language activities and focus on enrichment of vocabulary and phonemic awareness. Music, art and nature are also an integral part of our primary program.

When a child moves into the second year of the program, they continue to build on the foundation set in the first year. The child will begin to recognize many letters of the alphabet and will start to build words using the Moveable Alphabet.

The third year, extended day, of the Montessori primary program is very important for the child. This is the capstone year of the primary program when the children come to school for the whole day. Socially and emotionally they are growing, and they begin to take on leadership roles in the classroom. The extended day children support the younger children and are active in helping to maintain the classroom environment.

### The Absorbent Mind

Children under the age of six have extraordinary powers of mind. They have the ability to absorb knowledge from their surroundings just by living; this is known as the “absorbent mind.” Children take in their environment; the physical space, the language and movement of adults and other children. To be calm and happy, children under six need to explore and discover. They see the world through discovering eyes and are curious about everything they come across.

### The Prepared Environment

The prepared environment is a Montessori concept that the classroom is designed to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration by the child. The classroom is a ‘living room’ for children. The Montessori prepared environment respects, and protects, the child’s rhythm of life. It is a calm, ordered space, constructed to meet the child’s needs and match their scale of activity. Here, children experience a blend of freedom and discipline in a place especially designed for their development. In the prepared environment, there is a variety of activities, as well as a great deal of movement. A three-year-old, for example, may be washing cloths by hand while a four-year-old nearby is composing words with letters known as the Moveable Alphabet. Meanwhile, a five-year-old may be performing multiplication using a specifically designed set of beads, referred to as the Bead Frame. All these activities are especially created to support the child’s ‘absorbent mind’, which sets the foundation for all future learning.



## The Elementary Program

The Montessori elementary program is a natural extension of the primary program. In the primary program, your child explores interests, experiences the environment with their senses and practices many skills and processes they enjoy.

The elementary program takes these skills to the next level by continuing to enable students to move from work to work, group to group with an understanding that they are responsible for their own learning. This is done through small group lessons with students of various ages and one-on-one meetings with the elementary guide. This ensures they are exploring their own interests, as well as what is expected from the Alberta curriculum. A Montessori environment provides a rich, self-directed community of learners where each student contributes in a meaningful way. The children are assessed in a variety of ways that support assessment as learning, an Alberta Education mandate. In a prepared Montessori environment children apply all the skills they have developed to the environment around them.

A Montessori elementary student gains a strong sense of self, a high level of self-confidence and an awareness of their peers, the adults in their life and finally their place in the world as contributing members of society. They become engaged thinkers with an entrepreneurial spirit who are ethical citizens. As well, they are often 'above grade level' when assessed by traditional methods.

## Health, Life Skills & Daily Physical Activity

Health and life skills education fosters independence, social responsibility, healthy bodies and minds and a healthy relationship with nature.

During health and physical education, students are guided in cooperative games, in teams and lessons in specific skill-building and sharing opportunities. They are responsible to meet a standard set by Alberta Education for daily physical activity. Sometimes health and physical education is self-directed, which results in spontaneous, imaginative and cooperative play. Students often rise to the challenge of how to maintain 'fair play' and care for equipment. Throughout a three-year cycle, the elementary students are introduced to a broad variety of sports and other physical activities. These include visits from sports specialists, as well as trips to gyms, pools and other specialized venues.

The outdoor component of health and physical education includes local outings to protected parks. These experiences enrich the students' appreciation for nature and foster their innate curiosity about the world. The wellness component of health and physical education includes lessons on mindfulness and is based on brain basics that relate to focus, fact retrieval and more complex thinking. Health and physical education also provides an opportunity to be responsible,

ethical citizens. For example, the elementary students visit local senior retirement homes, and are involved in community initiatives such as International Peace Day, Earth Day, Jump Rope for Heart, the Lilac Festival parade and the Terry Fox Run/Walk.

All students are required to meet the 30 minute daily physical activity requirement. At MSofC, we ensure that students engage in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity and outdoor play daily.

## **Educational Outdoor Excursions and Going Outs**

Providing elementary students with off-site experiences is integral to an authentic and balanced educational program. Outdoor excursions are an important part of the inquiry process and students can connect their learning to the world outside of the school and more fully understand their impact on the environment and society. The Montessori School of Calgary fosters opportunities for large group outings including visits to museums, arts and cultural events, ski resorts, outdoor venues for hikes and other appropriate destinations aligning learning with the Alberta Education curriculum.

Going outs are undertaken by only a few children at a time when the students engaged in a project decide they need access to further information as a part of their research and learning or to finalize their work. Montessori students plan the going out by determining where they need to go, mapping out the route, writing a letter to request permission and inviting an adult to chaperone.

## **Rethinking Homework**

The Montessori School of Calgary proudly subscribes to the notion that there should be no homework, except on those occasions when it is truly necessary. There is no reason to believe children are disadvantaged in terms of their learning or life skills if they have less homework or none at all. The best educators are aware that children learn how to make good decisions by making decisions, not by following directions. In our Montessori community, students have a say in what they're going to learn and the circumstances under which they'll learn it. With these parameters and the amount of available time during the Montessori work cycle, children bring assignments home only if they have not utilized their class time efficiently. On occasion, students may choose to bring school work home to extend their learning opportunities in an area of interest.

## **Student Assessment and Reporting Periods**

Reasonable and timely student progress is communicated from teachers to parents through email updates, PAC meetings, Parent Education Workshops and at the Exchange – a coffee morning for parents.

Formative assessment is ongoing feedback that is done through multiple approaches and is often informal and can include observations, exit slips, discussions and peer evaluations. This type of assessment is designed to course correct. Summative assessment employs tests, quizzes or written reports as a final assessment.

Report cards use an indicator legend to summarize student achievement using language adapted from AMI Montessori principles as well as the Student Learner Assessment and Provincial Achievement Tests marking schemes. The document also includes a narrative commentary to communicate growth and development as well as regression and areas for growth.

Two parent-teacher conferences are scheduled per year. Teachers will contact parents earlier if concerns arise. Report cards are issued twice per year and communicate student achievement in relation to the Alberta Education Program of Studies Learning Outcomes and the student development, character formation and progress as it relates to the principles of the Montessori pedagogy.

Grade 3 students participate in Alberta Education Student Learner Assessment (SLA).

## **Accommodations**

Montessori School of Calgary seeks to support the learning needs of every student. When a student is having trouble attaining required skills, tutoring may be recommended. Communication between parents and teachers is paramount and, in some cases, students may be recommended for a psycho-educational assessment. From here, school staff will review the recommendations and work with learners and their families to develop a consultative plan with the goal of supporting diverse learning needs in the classroom.

## Policies, Practices, Procedures

### Student Code of Conduct and Discipline

The Montessori School of Calgary provides a safe environment for all members of the school community to work and learn. We are committed to a safe, caring, respectful, inclusive, equitable and welcoming learning and teaching environment. The Student Code of Conduct and Discipline supports and respects the individuality of all students and aims to create a positive and supportive environment focused on providing the best possible learning opportunity for each student.

Key to fostering growth in our students is the relationship between school and home as well as the commitment of families and staff to the Montessori philosophy. The staff and administration of MSofC work collaboratively with students and parents in setting appropriate standards for conduct and in maintaining high standards in this regard. Reinforcing positive student conduct contributes to the continual evolution of a culture of mutual respect amongst all members of the MSofC community. Student conduct must respect the rights, maturity, dignity and emotional and social health of all individuals. When conduct issues do emerge, staff work together with parents and children to develop a fair and equitable resolution that supports students' growth and development. Children learn that freedom and discipline co-exist. The core expectations of the classrooms are:

1. Respect yourself
2. Respect others
3. Respect the environment

Consistent with Section 12 of the School Act, and in keeping with the mission and vision of Montessori School of Calgary, each employee and student is responsible for acting positively in support of a welcoming and caring learning environment by:

- Acting at all times in keeping with the vision and mission of our school
- Respecting oneself and the rights of others in our school
- Conducting oneself in a manner that contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging
- Refraining from and refusing to tolerate bullying whether in or outside of the school or school hours or electronically
- Informing a responsible, trusted and caring adult in a timely manner of incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation or other unwelcoming or uncaring acts
- Attending school regularly and punctually
- Diligently and actively being prepared to learn and actively pursuing learning
- Being accountable for individual behaviours to students, teachers and school staff.

## Compliance

Students are expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their responsibilities as students of the school. Taking into consideration the student's age, maturity and individual circumstances, the Montessori School of Calgary will investigate each instance of unacceptable conduct and pursue disciplinary action in a matter consistent with the principles of fundamental justice and this Student Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Students are provided parameters in which to work, and when a child tests the environment outside of these parameters the child is gently reminded of the guidelines and how it affects themselves as well as other students.

Classroom behaviour and expectations are modelled daily by all teaching and administrative staff. The classroom teacher is responsible for the primary intervention in disciplinary situations occurring in the classroom, on the playground or at locations off-site. Redirection is the first approach to discipline.

If after these redirections and opportunities to practice improved behaviour the student does not meet these expectations, the child is brought in close to the teacher and shadows that staff member for a period.

If the behaviour continues repeatedly, the child engages in a private conversation with the staff member allowing the child the opportunity for a better understanding of how to correct the behaviour.

If undesirable behaviour persists, the Head of School is involved and if necessary, parents may be contacted.

For offenses of a more serious or repeating nature (i.e., physical violence, fighting, threats, vandalism, bullying) the Head of School may suspend the student in accordance with Section 21 of the Education Act – Private Schools Regulation and in keeping with the Education Act s36 and s37. In severe circumstances, an individual found to have engaged in unacceptable conduct may be subject to possible expulsion. Parents are notified both verbally and in writing of the incident and the suspension or expulsion. *(Updated February 2021)*

## Safe and Caring Policy

The Montessori School of Calgary provides a safe environment for all members of the school community to work and learn, free from fear, discrimination and harassment, while also promoting pro-active strategies and establishing guidelines to ensure that sexual and gender minority students, employees and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life, and are treated with respect and dignity.

## Attendance

Attendance at school every day is essential. The classroom is a close-knit community of learners who depend on one another and absenteeism impacts both learning and progress.

When a student is going to be absent for any reason, their parent must notify the school office by emailing [attendance@msofc.ca](mailto:attendance@msofc.ca). If notification is not received, the school may contact the primary caregiver as a safety measure. It is important for children to arrive on time as late arrivals are disruptive and can be stressful, possibly causing the child to be out of sync for the day. Absences will be recorded, and attendance and late records will be noted on report cards.

Extended absences from school may impact the student's progress and should absences and late arrivals become chronic, a meeting with the Head of School may be required.

Children may need to attend medical or other appointments and it is appreciated when these appointments are scheduled on non-school days where possible. Advance notification of a student's departure/return minimizes disruption.

## Health Guidelines & Expectations

If children are unwell, MSofC asks you to please keep your child home to help prevent further illness. Should you present at the school with a child who is exhibiting symptoms of being unwell, the school reserves the right to dismiss the child and families are expected to make alternate arrangements until the child returns to health. Alberta Child and Family Services offers the following guidelines regarding when children should remain at home because they are not well enough to participate in the activities of their regular school day:

- Chickenpox (the child should remain home until all sores have scabbed)
- Diarrhea or loose stool (the child should remain home until symptoms are resolved for at least 24 hours and/or assessed by a physician)
- Hepatitis A (the child should remain home until 14 days after onset of illness or seven days after onset of jaundice)
- Impetigo (the child should remain home until after antibiotic treatment has been initiated)
- Wheezing/Persistent Coughing; (the child should remain home until assessed by a physician or the symptoms are resolved)
- Measles (the child should remain home until four days after the appearance of a rash)
- Mouth sores with drooling (the child should remain home until a physician has determined that the symptoms are non-infectious)
- Mumps (the child should remain home until nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling)
- Pertussis, or “Whooping Cough” (the child should remain home until five days after antibiotic treatment has been completed, until three weeks after onset of symptoms, or until the coughing has stopped)
- Purulent conjunctivitis, or Red/Pink Eye (the child should remain home until after antibiotic treatment has been initiated)
- Rash, with fever or behavioral change (the child should remain home until a physician has determined that the symptoms are non-infectious)
- Rubella (the child should remain home until at least four days after onset of the rash, or up to five to seven days at the option of local health authority)
- Scabies, Head Lice, or other Infestation (the child should remain home until appropriate treatment has been completed)
- Strep throat or other Streptococcal Infection (the child should remain home until after appropriate antibiotic treatment)
- Symptoms of Possible Severe Illness, such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing
- Temperature, with a fever of 38.0 degrees C or higher (the child should remain home until symptoms are resolved, without the use of medication, for at least 24 hours)
- Tuberculosis (the child should remain home until a physician has approved his or her return)
- Vomiting (the child should remain home until symptoms are resolved for at least 24 hours)

If children exhibit symptoms of illness at school they are supervised by a staff member until a parent/caregiver arrives to take them home. It is the expectation that **the student is picked up**

**within one hour** of the parent/guardian being notified. Montessori School of Calgary encourages parents to have an additional emergency contact available for pick-up if parents/guardians both work and are not able to pick-up within the hour. Students may return to school once they are symptom free for a period of **at least 24 hours**. Please notify the school at **(403) 229-1011** or by emailing [attendance@msofc.ca](mailto:attendance@msofc.ca) when a child is remaining home from school.

## Disclosure of Health and Medical Information

Parents or guardians are responsible for notifying the school of their child's health needs and are expected to provide relevant, timely and accurate information about health concerns that could affect the child's behaviour and learning and/or the well-being of other students and staff. Health and medical concerns are to be reported annually or when the nature of the health or medical concern changes, on the appropriate forms provided.

## Allergies

A Severe Allergy Alert form must be completed by a parent/legal guardian when a student's attendance at school is affected by a **dangerous, life-threatening allergy**. The information gathered must be reviewed (and confirmed or updated) annually or sooner if the student's condition changes.

In the beginning of each school year or when a student has newly discovered allergies two forms must be given to the parents of the given child to be completed and returned to the school as soon as possible (task is initiated by Administration)

The forms are:

1. **Severe Allergy Alert Form**
2. **Request for Assistance to Administer Medication Form**

## Administering Medication

A Request for Assistance to Administer Medication Form is to be completed if a student's attendance at school requires that medication be administered at the school with or without the assistance of school staff. Completion of this form and authorization by the Head of School is required in all instances. This form must be completed when a student requiring medication registers at the school. The information gathered in this form must be reviewed (and confirmed or updated) annually or sooner if the student's condition changes, for as long as the student is in continuous registration at the school.



## Student Incidents/Accidents

In the event a student requires immediate medical attention due to accident or illness, staff will provide emergency first aid and contact emergency medical services. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure an adult remains with the student until relieved by a parent/guardian or emergency medical personnel. The school will contact a parent/guardian or emergency contact person as soon as possible. An incident report will be completed as soon as practicable following an incident/accident.

In the rare case where a student must be transported to a medical facility without a parent/guardian being contacted, a staff member will accompany the student.

Students who become ill at school or suffer a minor injury will receive first aid treatment and will be monitored by school staff. In the case where students must be dismissed from school as a result of illness or injury, they must be released to a parent/guardian or designate, and they will be supervised until they are picked up unless a parent/guardian directs the school to dismiss the student without supervision.

## School Nurse

A School Nurse will visit the school several times a year to administer immunizations to students in the school environment. The Nurse will work with families directly and all information regarding the student's immunizations are held with the student's family and the nurse on behalf of Alberta Health Services.

## Toilet Learning and Readiness

The school enrolls children who are completely toilet ready which, when defined, means the child is able to appropriately complete all bathroom procedures unassisted. As a school, we do not have the facilities or resources to manage toilet learning or any Pull Ups, diapers etc. Occasionally bathroom accidents do occur, and children are able to independently change from wet or soiled clothing into their extra set of clothes. In the event that accidents persist, the school expects that parents are available to pick up their child until such time as the toilet learning is fully mastered and the child is ready to resume the program.

## Arrival Procedures

The school doors are secured after 8:25am to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff and visitors. Please note that staff supervision is not provided prior to the start of the school day and parents are responsible for supervising their children on the playground prior to entry into the building.

A staff member greets children at each door and children are expected to remove outside footwear and walk independently to their respective classroom. Encouraging independence and personal responsibility are core components of the Montessori program.

## Dismissal Procedures

### Half Day Children

Half day children are dismissed at 11:30am each school day. Following a good-bye with the classroom guide, each child is dismissed in a quiet and calm manner. It is important for parents/caregivers to arrive on time. Individuals arriving more than 15 minutes late due to unforeseen circumstances are asked to contact the office at **(403) 229-1011**, or email [attendance@msofc.ca](mailto:attendance@msofc.ca).

### Full Day and Extended Day and Elementary Children

Full day and Extended day (Kindergarten) children are dismissed at 3:30pm. Elementary students are dismissed at 3:30pm. Students connect with parents in a quiet and calm manner following their formal goodbye exchange with their classroom guide or teacher.

## Pick up Authorizations & Early pick ups

Please remember to inform the school by emailing [attendance@msofc.ca](mailto:attendance@msofc.ca) or by calling the office at **(403) 229-1011** if there is a change in the normal drop off and/or pick up routine. This is important as the school does not dismiss children to unauthorized individuals. The safety of students is top priority.

All parents who are picking up early for appointments or other early dismissals are asked to **please email the office and classroom teacher** and a staff member will arrange for your student to be dismissed from their classroom to alleviate any potential disruption.

## Guests & Visitors

All guests visiting the school are required to sign in upon entrance to the school and wear a visitor's pass for the duration of their visit.

## What to bring

### Indoor Shoes

Comfortable, dress code appropriate indoor shoes - black, white, dark blue or grey with non-marking soles, with no characters, flashing lights and/or sparkles. These shoes remain at school.

### Outdoor Clothes

Full Day and Extended Day children and Elementary students go outside every day regardless of weather. Proper outdoor clothing includes rain boots and coats for the Spring, and warm boots, snow pants, mittens, hats and neck warmers for the Fall/Winter. For safety reasons, **no umbrellas or scarves** please – these items should remain at home. Kindergarten and Elementary children will need running shoes for Physical Education activities.

### Extra Set of Clothes

A complete set of clothing - shirt, pants, socks and underwear should remain at the school at all times. Should a piece of clothing become dirty or wet, children will change into the spare set of clothes and bring the dirty clothes home to be washed. Parents/caregivers are asked to return the cleaned clothes to the school with their child.

### School Supplies

MSofC families are not required to purchase any additional school supplies.

### Water Bottles + Lunch Boxes

All children (primary and elementary) are required to bring a water bottle that is a non-spill, size-appropriate, neutral colored (no characters). Extended Day, Elementary and Bambini students require a simple lunch bag/box with no characters or slogans.

### Elementary Only

Elementary students require a public library card, running shoes, and a backpack to remain at school for outings.

### Valuables and Toys

Toys, trading cards or digital devices of any kind are not permitted as school. If these items are brought to school, they are stored by the classroom teacher and returned to parents/caregivers at the end of the day.

## Dress Code

Montessori School of Calgary has a dress code policy for all students. This enhances unity and equality among students and encourages a sense of pride and school spirit. The dress code is intended to remove distractions and help to set a calm tone allowing the children to focus on their learning.

The dress code guidelines include casual and comfortable clothing with an emphasis on the school's colours which include navy blue, hunter green, charcoal grey, black, white and navy, blue/green plaid. Appropriate Montessori School of Calgary dress code clothing is available for purchase at various stores such as The Gap, Children's Place and Old Navy. In addition, MSofC is part of the Land's End School Online program, [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com).

MSofC dress code items are available at the school to borrow for the day if a child arrives without appropriate dress code clothing. These items go home with the child along with a note asking for the items to be laundered and returned to the school.

There may be special days whereby dressing outside the school dress code is encouraged.

***Please ensure that all children's clothing is labelled.***

*For more information on MSofC dress code, please refer to the school website.*

## Snacks + Lunches

The school encourages healthy nutrition practices. Families should observe these guidelines when packing lunches:

- LITTERLESS - all foods and beverages are to be packed in re-usable containers
- Save candy and chocolate for special occasions at home and avoid packing food containing chocolate or chocolate chips

Students do not have access to a microwave – please use thermoses for the purpose of keeping lunch food warm.

Hot lunches are available for purchase weekly through an external provider, the Lunch Lady. Information will be sent to families in the fall with order instructions.

*Due to allergies, no peanuts or tree nut products are permitted at the school.*

## Birthday Celebrations

### Primary

A few days in advance of a student's birthday, parents are asked to complete a form indicating a succinct timeline of life experiences and return it to the school along with one photo taken during each year of the child's life. For example, if the child is turning four select one photo taken when at one year old, another from when the child was two years old, etc. These photos are used to create a timeline of the child's life to display to classmates on their birthday. Please note that all photos will be returned to parents after the birthday celebration.

Birthday invitations to parties or other festivities are to be handed out privately via email or Canada Post, not through the school.

### Elementary

Students are invited to recognize their birthday if they wish to celebrate with classmates.

## Lost + Found

All personal items should be clearly labelled. As the school is shared with the Community Association, items must be secured in lockers in the evenings and after hours. Any found items will be stored in the school's lost and found, which will be sorted and any unclaimed items will be donated periodically.

## Before and After School Care

Before School Care is offered Monday-Friday from 7:45-8:10am

After School Care is offered Monday-Friday from 3:30-5:30pm

Before and After School Care is available to those children who require care before the start of the school day and beyond the end of the school day. This is a fee for service program. If you have any questions concerning Before and After School Care, or you would like to register your child, please contact the school at [info@msofc.ca](mailto:info@msofc.ca)

## Parking + School Zones/Traffic and Parking

Parking is limited around the school and is congested during drop off and pick up times. Parking is permitted on Cliff Street or 23rd Avenue. Please **DO NOT park on 22nd Ave** – this is a residential permit only area.

To ensure the safety of all children, it is imperative to drive slowly and sensibly near the school property. Please be aware of playground zone speed limits and the crosswalk located in front of the school. Vehicles must be parked at least 5 meters away from the stop sign and cross walk on the corner of 22nd Ave and Cliff Street across from the school. Parents are to please refrain from idling their vehicles and under no circumstances are children to be left unattended in a vehicle while a parent or caregiver enters the school grounds.

**VEHICLES MUST NOT BLOCK THE CROSSWALK!**

## Dogs/City Bylaws

The City of Calgary [bylaws](#) prohibit dogs from being allowed in school grounds, playgrounds and sports fields, even when on leash. **Dogs are not permitted within MSofC's school grounds at any time.**

During drop-off and pick-up times, dogs accompanying adults must remain in vehicles or be properly tied to the fence in such a way that places the dog on the sidewalk along Cliff Street and not inside the school grounds.

## Use of Technology

At Montessori School of Calgary, we believe in providing enriched curriculum opportunities in a low technology learning environment. When suitable and in accordance with the Alberta Education curriculum, teachers may enhance a topic of study and provide Montessori School of Calgary elementary students with limited digital resources to increase their ability to connect, create, and share. Computers and iPads are used by students and staff for educational purposes, to leverage learning, enhance teaching and conduct valid school business. Technology use is a privilege, not a right, and the expectations are for it to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner.

## Cellphones/Personal Electronic Devices

Students are not permitted to use any personal cell phones or other personal portable digital devices during the school day. If a parent needs to connect with their child during the school day, or if a child needs to contact their parent, a phone is available in the office. If a student brings a cell phone to school, it is with the understanding that the cell phone must be turned off and stored in the student's locker. Use is permitted before 8:15am and after 3:30pm.

\*Please note that students are not permitted to bring laptops, tablets, iPads or Smartwatches to school.

**Students are not permitted to use personal electronic devices at any time, for games, social media or sending text messages.**

If these guidelines are not followed, or inappropriate usage is observed, the cell phone or personal electronic devices will be confiscated by staff and returned to the student's parent/guardian.

## Privacy

MSoFC collects personal information under the authority of Alberta's Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) as well as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) as it applies to records in the custody and/or control of the Government of Alberta and Alberta Education. This includes information collected in the Annual Operating Plan. If you have any questions about the collection and/or its intended use, please contact the Head of School at (403) 229-1011.

## School Closures

In the event that the school must close due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, we will endeavor to communicate via email as early as possible. Parents are advised to visit the website and stay tuned to media advisories regarding school closures such as CBC.

## Evacuation/Lockdown/Fire drills

MSoFC works closely with a constable from Youth Education Start Smart Stay Safe Community & Youth Services through Calgary Police Service. Staff are trained with respect to lockdown procedures. Fire drills are held monthly, and lockdown exercises occur periodically throughout the school year.

## Smoking/Alcohol/Drugs/Cannabis

MSoFC is committed to ensuring safe and caring learning environments. The school is a smoke free environment, and staff are prohibited from smoking, burning or vaporizing or possessing, selling and consuming any of these products onsite. Employees are required to report to work fit to conduct their duties. Being under the influence of, or providing others with alcohol, cannabis, cannabis-infused products or illegal drugs at work or in the course of performing work related duties is strictly prohibited. Volunteers are expected to abide by these regulations.

## Outdoor Rules and Supervision

Students are expected to follow the outdoor rules regarding prohibited areas (bushes, up the hill), playground use and proper use of equipment. During school hours, children will be supervised on the playground by school staff. After school, staff will supervise children attending the After School Care program but other children not attending must be supervised by their parents.



## Community and Parent Involvement

### Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

Education is a partnership with mutual trust, full transparency and open lines of communication between the school and MSofC families. Upon registration of your child at MSofC, each parent becomes a member of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). This group of parent volunteers is committed to assisting the administration in supporting a strong partnership and sense of community between families and the school. PAC fosters open communication of non-academic topics, nurtures a sense of community and provides opportunity for engagement and parental involvement through assistance with extra-curricular activities and special events. The following are sub-committees of the PAC:

#### Parent Education

Educational opportunities for parents to broaden their knowledge of the Montessori philosophy, methodology and materials as well as how the methodology supports the Alberta Education curriculum. Additional seminars about general parenting issues may include but are not limited to screen time, sexual health, nutrition, behavioural challenges, etc.

#### Events

Annual events including the Fall Fair and Winter Carnival cultivate school spirit, a sense of community and parental engagement.

#### Classroom Representatives

Classroom representatives for each of the primary and elementary classrooms are available to answer questions parents may have about logistics of school routines, upcoming special events, volunteer opportunities and parent education events. Classroom representatives also reach out to connect with new families and welcome them to MSofC.

### Reports at PAC

The Head of School will provide a report to the PAC monthly to support our commitment to fostering communication and engagement within our school community. As a parent member, you are invited and encouraged to attend and participate in the monthly meetings held throughout the school year.

### Website and Parent Zone Portal

Parents are responsible for remaining informed. MSofC strives to communicate effectively with parents, staff and students. The school website is a primary source of information for all families and a Parent Zone portal is accessible via our website. All families will receive login information so that they can easily access information about school events, calendars, contact lists and policies. The Parent Advisory Committee posts agenda and meeting minutes within the portal.

## Volunteers

In order to ensure the security and safety of our staff and students, all volunteers in our school must be registered. A **Volunteer Registration form** must be completed annually. Volunteers are individuals who assist students in curricular or extra-curricular activities. Volunteers are also required to submit an original copy of a **Police Information Check** (including vulnerable sector search) to the school,. We are pleased to facilitate the process should you require assistance.

## Achievement Ceremony

At the end of every year, we come together as a community at two distinct ceremonies to recognize the Extended Day (Kindergarten) students for the completion of the 3-year primary program and to celebrate students in their final year of the lower and upper elementary programs (Grade 3 and Grade 6). These students are honoured with Achievement Ceremonies. It is an opportunity to award certificates for their accomplishments and wish the students, families and teaching staff who have supported them, continued success as they move toward the next chapter in their educational journey!

## Emails and Communicating with Staff

The school uses email to communicate important notices and information to families about key dates, events, closures, emergencies. Parents are encouraged to communicate with staff by way of email and may contact a staff member to arrange a meeting where a discussion can take place. All staff endeavour to respond to messages as soon as possible. If there is something concerning your child that requires immediate attention and is urgent, parents should contact the administrative staff who will readily act on the information, as teachers are typically unable to respond to email communication during teaching hours.

Please be mindful that in most cases, if your concern or query cannot be expressed within a paragraph, it is worthy of conversation by telephone or in person. Please do not hesitate to connect with us as we value and invite open and ongoing dialogue!

Please note that standard email format for MSofC staff is first name, period, last name @msofc.ca e.g. [susan.smith@msofc.ca](mailto:susan.smith@msofc.ca)

## Newsletters

A monthly newsletter is produced and distributed via email by the Head of School.

**A holistic approach to education and proven high academic success.**

**[www.montessorischoolofcalgary.com](http://www.montessorischoolofcalgary.com)**