



Policy Manual

Please keep this copy for your records

(updated for the 2023-2024 school year)

The following policies of Tomorrow Montessori School (TMS) ensure a safe and productive environment for all children and staff members. Please read all policies carefully and initial and date the bottom of each page. If any questions arise, we will be happy to discuss this with you. Once all policies are understood, please sign and date on the last page.

Mission Statement

The practices of Tomorrow Montessori School are rooted in the belief that each child is unique and thrives best in an environment that nurtures and adapts to his/her social, emotional and academic needs. Through creativity, mutual respect and an individualized education, we encourage the children to develop a personal balance of inner-discipline and freedom. Our hope is to inspire each child to embrace his/her role as a responsible member of a diverse global community. We foster an environment of cooperation and communication among staff, parents and students in which our children are allowed to continually develop for themselves in a school that fits their changing needs and that produces life-long learners.

Yeaman's Park Presbyterian Church

We are so grateful to Yeaman's Park for allowing us the use of their space. Please be respectful of the church grounds by only walking on the sidewalks and avoiding the flower gardens. Also, please take care to not leave any trash in the parking lots.

Attached is a copy of the Hold Harmless agreement requested by the church. This agreement releases Yeamans Park from any liability associated with TMS.

Parent Relations

The goal of TMS is to develop a three-way relationship among teachers/staff, parents and children. This relationship is integral to the success of your child's early childhood education. We strive to keep the lines of communication open and honest at all times. The ultimate goal is to honor the best interest of your child. We grant free and full access to our parents unless a court order prohibits it. These visits should not interfere with the daily routine and work cycle. Please consider if a visit would benefit your child or upset them.

With this goal in mind, there may be times when our opinions may differ. We ask that you honor our goals of keeping the best interest of your child while balancing the best interest of the school as a whole.

Admission Process

TMS is dedicated to providing the best education for children of ages 3 months to 5 years old without regard to race, color, national origin, or disability (to the extent that reasonable accommodations are possible). Questions about a child's placement should be directed to the director or administrative director.

The admission process is as follows.

- Inquire via telephone or email to the availability of openings
- Schedule a tour of the school. Tours are only given if there is a space available for your child.
- Meet with the director and teachers
- Submit an enrollment form along with a \$500 non-refundable deposit, \$200 non-refundable registration fee and \$300 to be applied to your first month's tuition. Payments can be submitted via check.
- Slow transition week is required for all new students. The schedule of the slow transition week will vary depending on the age of the child.

If classroom space is not available immediately for your child, his/her name is added to our enrollment pool. This is not a first-come waiting list. Our commitment to a balanced classroom, which is explained further in the policy manual, authorizes the director to select the children within our enrollment pool that best balance the classroom.

Enrollment Contracts

You are required to sign an enrollment contract before your child begins attendance. This contract is in place to secure a space for your child. This contract outlines the terms of tuition payments and ensures the clarity of these terms. A new contract is signed at the beginning of each school year. Every parent is required to sign an enrollment contract. This protects you as well as the school in the event that your child no longer attends TMS.

Webcams

Each classroom contains a webcam. These cameras are a live stream. They do not record and there is no sound. The security of the webcams is as strong as we all make it. The instructions to access the webcams and the passwords are only given to parents of children enrolled in TMS.

School Staff

All staff at TMS meet all hiring requirements set forth by DSS. These requirements include a SLED/FBI background check, central child registry check, a TB test and proof of educational requirements. TMS does not hire provisional employees. The above requirements are completed before a new staff member begins working at TMS.

Student File

Upon admission, a student file is created for your child. The South Carolina Department of Social Services, the TMS director, the lead teacher and you are the only ones with access to this file.

The file contains the following information, if applicable.

- enrollment packet from TMS
 - student enrollment form
 - getting to know you and your child
 - person(s) authorized for student pick up
 - emergency contacts

- physician information
 - authorization for medical treatment (notarized)
 - signed understanding of TMS policies
 - enrollment contract (notarized)
 - signed understanding of discipline policy
 - signed photo release form
- up-to-date immunization record
 - Department of Social Service #2900 form
 - observation reports
 - any incident reports, discipline reports, parent/staff communication

All information provided in student files are kept securely in the TMS office. This information will only be made available to parents, authorized TMS staff and the Department of Social Services.

Non-discrimination Policy

TMS admits students of any race, color, nationality and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in administration of the school's educational policies, admission policies and other school-administered programs.

Programs

We require a slow transition week for all new students. This week gives the new student time to adjust to the new environment. The schedule for this week will vary depending on the age of the new student.

The *infant/toddler program* is the learning center for babies beginning at three months and for young children who stay in this setting until they are eating/drinking independently, meet a level of social development and are walking with ease.

During these first few months cognitive, sensory and motor development begin to take place. Our teachers use their Montessori training to recognize these milestones.

New friends may join this environment when they are three months or older. For example, if your child is born January 1st their week of slow transition would start no earlier than April 1st.

The *pre-primary program* is the next step in the child's learning process. There is a slow transition process to moving into this classroom to allow the child to become familiar with their new class. The length of the transition is based on the needs of the child.

More independent learning occurs as the teacher works with each child to stimulate areas of interest. At this step, a child's preferred learning style begins to emerge. The interaction of younger children with older children also enhances the learning process. It is in this classroom that toilet learning occurs.

The final step is our *primary program*. There is a slow transition process to moving into this classroom to allow the child to become familiar with their new class. The length of this transition is based on the needs of the child.

This classroom is designed for children who have completed toilet learning up to age five. Nurturing each child's learning style encourages exploration and independence in learning and promotes social, emotional and academic growth.

Balanced Classrooms

Our commitment to parents and children is that each classroom provides a balanced learning environment. In keeping with the Montessori model, each classroom is composed of children representing diversity in age, gender and developmental range. When each classroom maintains a healthy balance of these factors, the optimal learning environment is possible for each child.

Supplies Provided by Parents

We require that parents provide a few items. **All items should be labeled with the child's name.** TMS is not responsible for lost items.

For the infant/toddler program, all of the following items should be included in the child's bag every day.

- All necessary food for the day. Children this age are introduced to solid foods at different times, depending on the parents' preference. We ask that you provide enough food for your child on a daily basis.
- pre-made bottles or sippy cups.
- lightweight blankets (2)
- seasonally appropriate changes of clothes (3 sets)
- diapers/wipes (enough for the day)
 - **We welcome the use of cloth diapers. We only accept pre-stuffed diapers. Diapers go directly into your wet bag at every change. Parents are responsible for providing a wet bag for their child. Without a wet bag, we will use disposable diapers. All used diapers go home every day.**
- eating utensils (if applicable)

For the pre-primary and primary programs, most of the following items will remain at TMS.

- nap mat: these are available for purchase from TMS for \$25 (this price is subject to change)
- one fitted sheet and one blanket for rest time: these will go home on the weekends for cleaning or more often if necessary.
- child-sized utensils in their lunch boxes: these will come home daily.
- three sets of seasonally appropriate changes of clothes (shirts, pants/shorts, underwear, socks)
- a pair of shoes
- Water bottle to go home daily

We understand that your child may have an item that he/she naps with each day, a special blanket or stuffed animal. We refer to these items as attachment items. We are happy to allow one small item to come with them daily for rest. However, we do ask that all other items (stuffed animals and toys) be left at home or in the car. Please see further explanation in the Personal Items section of the policy manual.

Tuition Policy

We encourage tuition payments on a monthly schedule. While we do accept weekly tuition payments, this option incurs a 5% increase in the tuition cost. Parents choosing to pay annually receive a 5% discount on tuition.

Tuition payments can be made in the following ways.

- checks payable to Tomorrow Montessori School and delivered to the office.

Tuition is due on the first of each month and is considered late on the fifth of the month at 3 p.m., the end of school day. At this point a \$35 late fee is added to the payment. If the payment is still outstanding by the 15th, another \$20 fee is added making the late fee \$55. A meeting then takes place between the parents and director to discuss payment options. TMS reserves the right to suspend a student's attendance if payment goes 30 days past due.

Weekly payments for the week which follows are due Friday at 3 p. m., the end of the school day. A \$25 late fee is added to any late payments. If payment goes two weeks past due, a meeting takes place between parents and the director to discuss payment options. TMS reserves the right to suspend a student's attendance if payment goes 30 days past due.

TMS applies a \$50 return check fee. After two returned checks your account must be paid by cash or money order.

As stated in the enrollment contract, a prorated refund is issued in the event of a dismissal request from TMS. A voluntary removal from TMS results in no refund of tuition payments. TMS reserves the right to waive the terms of the enrollment contract due to the following circumstances.

- relocation of 45 miles outside the Charleston metropolitan area
- a family health situation that prevents the child from attending or prohibits a parent's ability to bring the child to school
- family hardship in which case TMS reserves the right to ask for financial documentation

School Hours

Before school program: 7am-8am

Full-day program: 8am-3pm

**morning drop-off for school begins at 7:55 a.m.

Extended day program: 3pm-3:30pm

After school program: 3pm-6pm

**pick up during the after school program can occur any time between 3pm-6pm

The drop-off and pick-up procedure is as follows.

- At drop-off, you or your authorized person parks in the front lot and walks your child into his/her classroom. At pick-up you or your authorized person comes to the classroom and walks your child out of the building. This procedure allows for a safe drop-off and pick-up since this is when children are signed in/out by you or your authorized person.
- During drop off and pick up times, we ask that you help by reinforcing the guidelines of the school: no running indoors, quiet inside voices, for safety reasons, children are not allowed to open the doors to the outside.

The pick-up times are strictly enforced. This ensures that proper teacher/child ratios are met at all times. A late fee is charged for late pick-up. For any part of 5 minutes past the pick-up time a \$10 fee is charged. This fee is added to the next month's tuition payment. After 15 minutes, the parents will be called. If they are unable to be reached the other authorized pick up persons will be called to pick up the child. In the event that no one can be reached to pick up your child (and it is 45 minutes or more past pick up time), the Hanahan Police Department will be called to act as guardian until a parent can be reached.

If your child needs to be picked up early, please notify the director in advance of the pick-up time. If the pick-up is due to an emergency, please call the office to notify the director of the expected time of your arrival.

Office Hours

Monday-Friday 8am-3pm

Due to the general pace of our day, please schedule a time if you would like to meet with the director or

teachers.

School Calendar

Our goal is to minimize the number of days that TMS is closed. We are aware of the schedules of most working parents and we will accommodate as much as possible. Please refer to the attached School Calendar for the 2023-2024 school year. **Families are responsible for full tuition unless otherwise stated by the director of TMS.**

Parent Communication

Special announcements or notifications are sent through email and posted on the announcement board located in the hallway of the school. Please check these areas regularly.

We ask that you keep conversations with your child's teacher brief during drop-off and pick-up times. It is important that teachers are adequately supervising all children during this busy time. Any concerns that warrant extra time can be addressed in a scheduled parent meeting with the teacher and director, with a phone call or through email.

Changes at home

Changes in the home can have a big impact on your child. Please inform the director as well as your child's teachers if there have been any major changes that have occurred such as a death in the family, divorce or separation, the absence of a parent, or any other incident that may affect their well-being.

Siblings

A sibling discount of 10% is applied to the oldest child in the family. This discount cannot be applied in conjunction with an annual discount.

Enrollment priority is given to siblings of children already enrolled at TMS. However, the enrollment of that sibling is NOT guaranteed. We have limited space within infant enrollment. We will always do our best but we cannot guarantee that space will be available.

Communication with Director/Staff During School Hours

If communication with the director/staff is necessary during school hours, please call and a message will be delivered immediately to the staff member who will return your call at the first available time. The director and teachers can also be reached through e-mail. Our e-mail addresses are listed in our staff directory located on our website. The director and teachers are available for parent conferences by appointment only.

Family Court Dispute Policy

Due to student privacy and other concerns, TMS will comply with court mandated subpoenas and will not voluntarily provide information (outside of regularly disseminated information regarding child or parent) in family court disputes. During all matters of family dispute, any legal documents requesting information on behalf of the school, family enrolled in the school, or student enrolled in the school must be submitted to the Director. All of these requests will be handled by the director. We choose not to involve our teachers in these disputes. Any request for info should be requested via email. All the information that is shared with one party will be shared with the other as well.

Grievances

Any grievances should be expressed directly to the director. The grievance will be documented and steps will be taken immediately to resolve the situation. If a situation ever arises between a parent and staff

member, we ask that the issues are discussed in a respectful manner, not in the company of any child.

Observations

Observations are a very important part of the Montessori model. Our staff implements observation into the everyday routine of the classroom. Information about your child's development is given as needed.

You also have the opportunity to observe your child's classroom through live stream webcams, using a secure password. The security of the network is dependent on these passwords remaining confidential. Please do not share your password with anyone. You can log on any time to our website to see your child's classroom. The cameras are programmed for a live stream. No footage is recorded and the sound is muted.

We have an open door policy. Parents are welcome in our school at any time. We ask you to consider if your visit would be a disruption to the class as your child is getting acclimated to their environment.

Monitoring and Security

Class attendance is taken daily. The class tracking cards accompany the teachers at all times as they move about and the building. These cards track the students as they enter and exit the classroom/building.

All doors of the school remain locked at all times. Please only use the front door as an entrance and exit. During peak drop-off and pick-up times a staff member will be at the door to let in you or your authorized person. At all other times, please ring the bell at the front door and a staff member will admit you.

If you are coming to pick up your child during regular school hours from 8am-3pm, please call the office ahead of time to alert us of your arrival. This is an extra safety measure we take to ensure the safety of all the children at the school.

A staff member is responsible for controlling access at the door. We ask that you not hold the door open for anyone who may be coming in behind you, even if you know them to be another parent. Please allow the staff members to monitor the door traffic. Please take care to ensure the door closes securely.

Discipline Policy

We do not expect discipline to be a problem within the classroom. The technique of redirecting children has proven to be an effective method in resolving discipline issues.

- 1) Our focus on discipline lies in the principles of conscious choices, encouragement, and positive intention.
- 2) No corporal punishment shall be used with students.
- 3) Children will master a clear understanding of the boundaries that are put in place to maintain an orderly and safe learning environment.
- 4) There will be no verbal abuse, such as inappropriate language or abusive voice commands.
- 5) There will be no cruel or harsh punishment of any kind.
- 6) Unsupervised isolation is not permitted. The child shall be in the same room within sight of the staff and facing staff if isolation from the group is used.
- 7) Staff shall not deprive children of food, liquids, naps or bathroom facilities.

8) If a staff member violates the disciplinary policy, then that member must explain in writing to the director the details of the violation and that member may be subject to dismissal.

The following intentional aggressive physical behavior is not tolerated in the classroom:

- no physical contact of any kind between students or directed towards the staff
- profane language or disruptive noises
- destruction of school materials

In the event of continued discipline problems, the following steps are followed:

1. The child is immediately removed from the environment. When the child has calmed down, the teacher talks with the child about behavior and provides encouragement and redirection.
2. The behavior is documented.
3. Notification is sent to the parents explaining and documenting the issue(s) that occurred in the classroom.
4. A conference among staff, director and parents takes place to discuss possible options.
5. If the behavior continues, the director uses her discretion to decide the best course of action.

****Please see attached Discipline Policy. Parent signatures are required.**

Attendance/Punctuality

We at TMS believe that parent-child time is the most important time. While we do not hold strict attendance and punctuality policies, we do place emphasis on the importance of routine since children thrive in a daily routine. In the case of punctuality, we do ask that routine tardiness be avoided. It does cause disruptions in the classroom when a child is late in joining the group. As noted in the class schedule section of the manual, the work cycle time begins first thing and is the time when children show the most amount of focus. Keep in mind that tardiness interferes with their work time.

Should either attendance or punctuality become a concern, the director will notify the parents to discuss a solution.

If you plan to be late dropping off your child, we ask that you call to let the director know what time to expect your child to arrive. **In observance of our daily routine, we ask that you do not drop off after 10:30 am, unless cleared by the director.** This will allow for the child to eat lunch before the transition into rest. We often see that a late drop off can be confusing or upsetting for the child and can disrupt the classroom.

School hours allow for eleven hours of child care options. We do ask that a child's day not exceed ten hours. You can compare a child's day at school to an adult's day at the office. A ten hour day has a child "at work" 50 hours/week.

Drop-off and Pick-up

You fill out a form which states those who are authorized to pick up your child from school. Your child is not released to anyone who is not listed on this form. You should have someone on this list who is available for mid-day pickup in case of illness. Authorized persons are required to show photo ID at time of pick-up. We ask that an email be sent or a phone call be made to alert the school when someone other than the normal pick-up person is getting your child that day.

As mentioned before, you or your authorized person are responsible for walking your child to his/her classroom in the mornings and coming in to walk him/her from the classroom in the afternoons. Also, remember that this is not the time to have a lengthy conversation with staff members since they must

focus on supervising all children during peak pick-up and drop-off times.

Drop in for before and/or after school

If your child is not enrolled in the before school and/or after school program, you must email a request to the Director for them to come early for the before school program or stay late for the after school program. These requests are not guaranteed to be granted. The ratios in the classrooms or staff scheduled during those times may not allow for additional students.

The fee for these drop in services will vary based on the amount of notice given. All requests submitted with a week or more notice will be charged the "with notice" rate. Any requests made with less than a week's notice will be charged the "short notice" rate. The variation in these rates is due to the staffing changes that need to occur to accommodate the request.

The Director reserves the right to waive these fees in the case of emergency situations.

Dress Code

While TMS does not require a school uniform, please consider the following when dressing your child for school.

- Children in the toddler and primary classrooms should dress in clothing that allows for quick and easy removal for using the toilet. Often accidents occur when a child cannot get his/her clothes removed quickly enough.
- Shoes should fit properly and not cause problems when running or playing outside. To maintain safety when running, we ask that no open toed shoes be worn at school.

Personal Items from home

Personal items and toys are not permitted at school. They may become lost or broken and are too often a source of disagreement or disappointment. We also cannot ensure these items will be kept safe and in one piece.

We also ask that jewelry such as necklaces, bracelets or rings be left at home. Often, these items are made of beads. These beads become a choking hazard if the item were to break here at school. The welfare of these items, again, cannot be ensured. This is often very upsetting to the child.

Diapering

In the infant/toddler room, all diapering occurs on the changing table. The staff documents diaper change times and the results of the diaper change, such as wet or bowel movements. No rash medication is administered unless a medication form has been filled out and the medication is provided.

In the pre-primary room, toilet learning is practiced. All training pants changes occur in the adjoining restroom. With this method, children begin to participate in the toileting process. In compliance with DSS and DHEC regulation, the children in the classroom need to be in pull up diapers. More information about this technique is available upon request. All training pants changes and toilet attempts are documented in the child's daily reports.

We are a cloth diaper-friendly facility. We do ask that only all-in-one diapers are used. You are responsible for providing a wet bag to collect your child's used diapers home daily.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, TMS follows the schedule of Berkeley County Public Schools. When a

threat of inclement weather exists, the director will send emails regularly with updates. We reserve the right to call early dismissal in the event of inclement weather. If this occurs all parents are called and required to pick their children up within one hour. We want to ensure that staff can safely get home once all children have been picked up. **Families are responsible for full tuition unless otherwise stated by the director of TMS.**

Emergency Plan

Please see attached Emergency Plan.

Outbreak, Epidemic and Pandemic

In the event of an outbreak, epidemic or pandemic TMS will look to our governing agencies: DSS, DHEC and the State of South Carolina for guidance in relation to the closing and reopening of TMS. Our priority is to the students, staff and families and TMS will make these decisions with their safety and well-being in mind. **Families are responsible for full tuition unless otherwise stated by the director of TMS.**

First Aid

In the event of an accident, we administer first aid, as needed. Staff members are trained in first aid/CPR. In every case, an incident report is filled out by the staff member who assisted in the incident. A copy is given to you to sign the day of the incident and a copy is added to your child's student file. You will be called if further medical treatment is required. If you cannot be reached, your authorized person(s) will be called. In the event that no one can be reached, and medical attention is needed, an ambulance will be called to transport your child to the preferred medical facility for medical attention.

Medical Treatment

In the event that medical treatment is needed the following steps are followed:

1. Staff assesses the situation to determine if it is a medical emergency.
2. If it is an emergency, 911 is called.
3. If medical treatment is needed, but it is not an emergency, the child's parent(s) is (are) called to pick up the child.
4. If the parents cannot be reached, the other emergency contacts are called.
5. In the event that no emergency contacts can be reached, an ambulance is called to transport the child to receive the proper medical care. A TMS staff member with whom the child is comfortable remains with the child until a parent arrives. Important emergency contact information will accompany the child.

Medication

Medications are administered only with written consent using the Medication Form. Over-the-counter and prescribed medicines must be in original containers bearing the pharmacist's label and sealed in a ziplock bag. Documentation from the physician or nurse who prescribed the medication is required. The letter should include instructions for the proper dosage. All medications are kept in the TMS office. Ointments and creams used for diaper rash are subject to Medication Forms but can be kept in the classroom out of the reach of children.

Health Records

The following medical records/forms are required for your child's student file.

- A current, up-to-date immunization record
- student health form
- notarized emergency release form
- doctor's letter for medication (if applicable)

Sick Child

Since children are frequently prone to illness, we do our best to reduce the recurrence of illness by exercising a strict disinfecting and cleaning routine. Please keep in mind that we have small babies at our school. We want to take care to keep these little ones from exposure to illness.

In the case of illness, please refer to the DHEC exclusion list attached.

If your child exhibits the following symptoms, please keep him/her home from school.

- Not well enough to go outside/participate in normal school activities
- Temperature readings in excess of 100 degrees F (must be fever free for 24 hrs without medication to return to school)
- Undiagnosed rash
- Discharge from ears or eyes; inflammation of eyes
- Sore throat or persistent cough
- Fresh cold with a profuse yellow or green discharge from the nose
- Vomiting (must go 24 hours with no vomiting before returning to school)
- Diarrhea (must go 24 hours with no diarrhea before returning to school)
- Any type of contagious disease
- Lice. Children must be nit-free to attend school

If your child comes to school with or begins to show any of the above symptoms, you will be asked to pick him/her up within one hour of the phone call. We do not want to expose any other children to illness and we are not staffed to monitor a child that cannot participate in normal school activities. Please have someone on your contact form who is available during the day in case midday pick-ups are required.

Lunch

Mealtime and nutrition are an important part of the Montessori curriculum. During this time children practice their table manners while they also learn positive eating habits and engage in social time. You are responsible for providing a healthy lunch for your child every day. A child-sized fork and/or spoon (if it is age appropriate) should be packed in the child's lunch every day.

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED HEALTHY LUNCH POLICY. Because of the severity of some student allergies, we do not allow any peanut/tree nut products.

If your child's lunch requires refrigeration, please include a cold pack since we do not provide refrigerator space for lunches.

Snacks

TMS provides healthy snacks throughout the day for the pre-primary and primary programs. Since the age at which parents introduce solid foods varies, we ask parents of children in the infant program to pack healthy lunches and snacks for their children.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a very special time for children. We honor each child on their birthday with various classroom activities. In an effort to maintain equality in our classrooms, we ask that you not bring treats or favors for your child's birthday. Our staff will ensure that your child has a special day.

If you have a birthday party for your child and plan to invite anyone from their class, we ask that you invite everyone. Children get very excited about their birthday parties. At this age, they do not understand the logistics of birthday parties. All they understand is whether they were invited or not. It is a special time that

children share with their friends.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, TMS follows the schedule of Berkeley County Public Schools. When a threat of inclement weather exists, the director will send emails regularly with updates. We reserve the right to call early dismissal in the event of inclement weather. If this occurs all parents are called and required to pick their children up within one hour. We want to ensure that staff can safely get home once all children have been picked up. **Families are responsible for full tuition unless otherwise stated by the director of TMS.**

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School Calendar

Our goal is to minimize the number of days that TMS is closed. We are aware of the schedules of most working parents and we will accommodate as much as possible. Please refer to the attached School Calendar for the 2021-2022 school year. **Families are responsible for full tuition unless otherwise stated by the director of TMS.**