



Bellevue Montessori School

Parent Handbook Pre-Elementary School

**Bellevue Montessori School, Inc
2411- 112th Avenue NE
Bellevue, Washington 98004**

January 1, 2010

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Vision Statement

Bellevue Montessori School develops an academically, socially, emotionally and culturally educated community of students within the framework of acceptance, compassion and understanding. We prepare students for future educational endeavors in order to become contributing members of their immediate and global communities.

Mission Statement

Bellevue Montessori School offers an enlightening and nurturing environment to support each individual child in building a foundation for life-long learning. We provide an atmosphere where teachers and parents work together to delight and empower the child in his or her education. Bellevue Montessori School provides age-appropriate curriculum to challenge the child and create internal, instinctive, and permanent understanding through interactions with materials and real-life experiences.

Bellevue Montessori Principles

The Teachers:

- Assist the child in his/her physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth;
- Provide a reality-based interrelated curriculum;
- Encourage left and right brain integration;
- Acknowledge sensitive periods for learning;
- Serve as guides who link the children with appropriate materials;
- Know that love, rather than judgment, teaches acceptance;
- Recognize that appreciation of all life is inherent to happiness;
- Believe peace, through education, is attainable.

The Children:

- Study in a richly prepared environment;
- Work in mixed-age groupings;
- Enjoy freedom of choice with responsibility;
- Use self-teaching manipulative materials;
- Develop character and personality;
- Progress at their own rates;
- Build a positive self image;
- Learn logical consequences for behavior;
- Work individually and interact in groups;
- Teach each other;
- Receive perceptual motor education for neuromuscular development;
- Receive lessons in grace and courtesy to attain self-control;
- Experience sensory - based learning to establish discernment skills.

Parent Communication

Good communication between you and our staff is essential to the proper care of your child. You are always welcome in our school. We encourage you to visit to observe your child or to participate in volunteer class activities. These activities are coordinated with your child's teachers. Please plan your formal observation of the classroom after September when the class is settled.

At the beginning of each month, the classroom teacher will send home a newsletter highlighting curriculum and other activities in the classroom for that month.

We schedule two parent conferences, one in November and one in March, to discuss your child's progress. Parents also receive written progress reports in January and June. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please contact your child's teachers by phone or e-mail. Teaching staff is available by phone from 8:00 – 8:30am on school days. Teachers access their emails after school and at various times when the children are with specialists.

It is important that you feel comfortable about the choice of school you have made for your child. Please plan to attend parent discussion groups, parent meetings, conferences, and special events.

Administrative Staff

Christine Hoffman, Director
Jayme Thornton, Assistant Director
Kathryn Cox, Office Manager
Pam Myers, Operations Manager

Parent Education

Parent education is offered at different times throughout the school year. In October classes are offered to familiarize you with the Montessori curriculum. In the winter a parenting course called "Love and Logic" is offered in the evenings. Watch for information for these helpful classes.

Discipline

Our discipline policy is based on respect. We have three ground rules that we strictly enforce. Your child will be asked to:

- Treat others respectfully;
- Treat school property with care;
- Engage in behavior that promotes safety to self and others.

If a child chooses to ignore these rules, a teacher will remind him/her of the appropriate action. This is handled in a quiet and respectful manner. Children are offered acceptable choices and alternatives so they learn appropriate behavior. If necessary, the child may be asked to sit and observe classmates to gather composure. The child will be seated in a chair and invited to rejoin the other children when self-control is re-established. Some incidents of unacceptable behavior, such as biting, require a child to be taken home for the day. Because of severe health hazards that can result from a human bite, we ask for your support in implementing this policy.

If behavioral concerns continue, we ask parents to work with the classroom teacher to address these concerns. The administration will work with parents and teachers if needed.

A child may be dismissed from school because of severe behavioral difficulties and tuition will not be refunded.

The School Day

Typical Daily Schedule

7:15	-	8:40	Activity Club
8:40	-	9:05	Arrival Time
9:05	-	11:00	Montessori Class time
11:00	-	11:50	Circle Time & Recess
11:50	-	12:00	Dismissal from morning classes
12:00	-	1:00	Lunch & Recess
12:30	-	12:45	Quiet Reading Time
12:45	-	2:35	Montessori Class Time
2:45	-	3:15	Dismissal
3:15	-	5:45	Activity Club

Recesses are staggered throughout the morning and afternoon. Each recess is 20 minutes.

Arrivals

Early Arrival & Activity Club (7:15 to 8:40)

Students may arrive as early as 7:15, for participation in the morning Activity Club. You must sign your child in each day.

Morning Arrival & Drop Off (8:40 to 9:05 AM)

Arrival time is from 8:40 to 9:05 AM. As you pull forward and stop, one staff member will come to your car to have you sign your child in on the electronic hand-held device. Another staff member will escort your child to class. **Please remain in your car to wait for our staff to come to you!**

We encourage you to have your children here a few minutes early to allow time to hang coats, put away lunch boxes, wash hands and settle in to our school day routine. Children who are late in the morning miss the circle activities and lessons. Often they will feel left out and self conscious about being tardy.

Afternoon Arrivals (11:45 to 12:00)

Children attending school only in the afternoon may arrive from 11:45 – 12:00 and be escorted to class by a staff member.

Late Arrival Sign In (After 9:05 or after 12:00)

If your child arrives after the arrival staff has returned to their classrooms, please park your car in one of the parking spots, sign your child in at the front desk and walk him/her to the classroom. **Please do not drop your child off outside; every child must be escorted into the school by an adult.**

Arrival Grace and Courtesy in the Parking Lot

Grace and Courtesy lessons are a fundamental part of the Montessori philosophy and curriculum. Please model grace and courtesy whenever you are on our campus and direct any concerns to the administration.

- No left turns into our driveway when approaching from the south, **if there are cars waiting on the shoulder.**
- Please form two lanes when entering our driveway.
- Pull forward as far as possible, even if your car is the only one in the driveway.
- Please leave the center lane open for passing.
- Please wait for a staff member to escort your child across the parking lot and into the building.
- **Please do not leave your car – ever – unless you are parked in a designated space.**
- **Do not leave children unattended in your car or in the parking lot.**
- Please be prepared to say good-bye to your child by ending cell phone calls before entering the driveway.

Montessori Class Time

During the Montessori class time students select work from a variety of curriculum areas: math, reading, writing, geography, history, geometry, botany, or zoology. After a student's completed work is reviewed by one of the teachers, the student may choose another learning activity. Teachers give individual and small group lessons throughout the morning.

Lunch

The school does not provide lunch. Please send your child's lunch in a labeled lunch box. Choose a plastic thermos with a pop-up spout for safety and cleanliness. This kind is easiest for your child to handle. **Always include two napkins, required spoons or forks, or a straw in the lunch box.** We encourage you to provide nutritious lunches. Pop, sugary drinks and candy are not acceptable at school. Water is the ideal beverage for lunch and is always available at school. It is imperative that we receive written notification from your child's pediatrician of any food allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have. Candy of any kind may not be eaten at school. Please help us teach your child good eating habits by reinforcing these guidelines.

Lunch Packing Tips

What is a good lunch? Definitely one that is eaten. Sometimes children are finicky eaters and some experimentation is necessary. Children go through periods where they don't want a lot to eat. Do not get upset; it will pass. If the child is hungry, s/he will eat. Pack small portions, cut in pieces. Preschool children do better with small portions several times a day rather than three large meals. Sometimes it is hard to tackle a whole carrot or sandwich. Cut them into interesting shapes. Concerns for safety prevent us from heating lunches.

We do not permit children to throw food away, except half eaten containers of yogurt or certain fruits such as bananas. If your child keeps bringing food home try something else. If your child is used to a specific type of ethnic food please send it.

Children are more likely to eat what they choose and help to prepare. Let children help you prepare the lunch. They can assemble, pack and wrap. Start the night before to avoid a morning rush. Above all, using permanent ink, label the lunch box and all containers in it. Place an identifying mark on the lunch box, such as a ribbon, a shape, or a color mark because many lunch boxes look the same.

Recess

On most days our children go outside for recess. We encourage students to wear layered clothing, including waterproof jackets and hoods, when the weather is cool or rainy. Layered clothing generally is advisable from late October to April.

School policy maintains that a child who is well enough to go to school is well enough to go outside for playtime. If outdoor play is not advisable, please send a written notice from your physician explaining the situation.

Dismissal

Morning Dismissal (11:50 – 12:00)

All children who are enrolled for the morning class only are dismissed from 11:50 – 12:00. During this time staff members will escort children to cars for pickup. Parents must sign children out on one of the hand held devices. Children not picked up by 12:00 are returned to the classroom and given a snack.

Afternoon Dismissal (2:45 – 3:15)

Afternoon dismissal starts at 2:45 and ends at 3:15. Staff will again escort children to cars for pickup. Parents must sign children out on one of the hand held devices.

Late Dismissal and Activity Club (After 3:15)

Children not picked up by 3:15 will be signed in to Activity Club and you will be charged for the Activity Club drop in fee. Parents must pick up children and sign them out at the front desk.

Dismissal Grace and Courtesy in the Parking Lot

- When you pull up into the outside lane, please pull over as far to the left as possible. If you pull up on the inside lane, closest to the curb, please pull over as close to the curb as possible.
- Always pull forward as far as possible.
- **No left turns into the driveway from 112th Ave NE at dismissal times!** Please continue down to the business buildings, Corporate Campus East, and form one line on the shoulder to turn right into the driveway. You can be ticketed for blocking traffic. Also, if people are trying to pass you on the right there is a greater likelihood of an accident occurring. It also causes a bottleneck on NE 24th St., as cars are waiting to turn left onto 112th Ave NE.
- All staff members of Bellevue Montessori School will request any driver to follow the above guidelines. Please accept their request with respect and courtesy.
- **Please be prepared to greet your child by ending cell phone calls before you child is brought to your car.**
- Parents are responsible for buckling their children into their car seats before driving away.

General Information for your Student

First Days

The first day is a great change in your child's life. His/her adjustment to the new environment depends, in large part, upon your attitudes and good communication with the teacher. Our goal is to make it a calm orderly process for everyone. That is challenging with many new parents and students all converging on a new place. **Please make sure you get answers to all of your questions before the first day, so there are no delays in getting children into their classrooms and settled with their new teachers and classmates.**

Children quickly learn that going to school is a normal and natural part of their growth and an extension of home life. If you are calm and positive in your approach, your child will sense this.

Just a few days before school begins, teach your child the name of the teacher. All staff is addressed by last name, i.e. "Mrs....", "Ms....", "Mr...."

Upon arrival on the first day, pull up to the front door and use the drop off guidelines. Say a friendly good-bye, only one time, and leave. Parents should have a matter-of-fact attitude, which gives the child great security. A parent's brief good-bye allows the child to attend to the teacher, classmates and classroom activities. Any tears that may occur are then quickly dried.

Children do not bring toys to school. This includes stuffed animals.

Most young children live in the moment and are uncomfortable answering a lot of questions about their day. Rather than asking direct questions of your child the minute s/he is in the car, you may learn more about his/her experiences by observing play and being open to discussions at various times. Often young children will want to talk about school at bedtime, while riding in the car, or even days later!

Please feel free to call or email the school at any time if you want to check on your child.

Clothing

Students bring many identical items each day. To avoid last minute delays and tears at dismissal clearly label all removable clothing, belongings and lunch boxes.

Your child will need an extra set of clothing. Pack a set to keep in the classroom in a zip-lock bag and label it clearly with your child's name.

All belongings left at school in our lost and found box will be set out at conference days and unclaimed clothing will be donated to charity. You may look through the lost and found at any time.

Toileting

All students at Bellevue Montessori School must be completely toileting on their own. Because our teachers are busy with classroom responsibilities, children must be independent in the bathroom. This includes unfastening and fastening garments, wiping themselves, flushing and washing hands. Parents will be called to assist a child if s/he has a bowel movement accident at school.

Birthdays

Your child's birthday circle at school is his/her special time to share with friends. One of our school traditions is the "Birthday Book". As part of your child's celebration, you may bring a special children's book as a gift to the classroom. Please observe these simple guidelines to help birthday observance go smoothly:

- Send a note to the teacher in advance so that class time can be allotted.
- You may provide a special birthday cookie or fruit treat that comes prepackaged from a store.
 - **We have several children with severe life-threatening allergies and the staff must be able to read the ingredients on the package.**
 - The children prefer fresh fruit or cookies.
 - **Cupcakes, cakes, and chocolate will not be served.** If this rule is forgotten, the school will provide a substitute snack.
- Napkins and cups for water should be included.

We have a very special Montessori birthday circle focusing on your child's life and his/her time spent on earth. Because we want this to be the emphasis of the celebration, we ask that party favors, hats and balloons be saved for your party at home.

Children love to receive mail! We ask that party invitations be sent via email or regular mail unless you send an invitation to each child in the class. This assures that children's feelings are not hurt if they are not invited to your child's party. Address lists for each classroom are available at the main office.

Gifts

School is not the appropriate place for children to exchange gifts. Please do not ask the staff to distribute any type of gifts to the children.

Snack

To insure a nutritious and varied menu, each family is asked to bring in one snack item monthly. This item will be assigned to you at the beginning of the school year.

The state requires that all snacks be brought to school in the original store containers.

Sharing and Toys

You will receive information from your child's teacher about your child's sharing schedule. Your child may bring pictures, postcards, books, and items from nature or cultural artifacts. Please remember to **leave all toys at home** because they cause great disruption in the classroom and sometimes disputes between children. **Absolutely no items of a violent nature are allowed at school.** Please support your child's teacher in this policy.

Pet Policy

If there is a fish, reptile or other pet in the classroom, parents will be notified. Children may not bring their pets to school.

Health and Safety

In case of an emergency, school personnel will call 911 and follow the recommendations of the responding emergency medical personnel.

Medical Information

We are required by state law to maintain immunization records for each student. Parents must submit an adequate, updated **Immunization Form** annually. New **Consent for Emergency Treatment** and **Health Information & Policy** forms must be signed and on file in our office each year. Any child without immunization records on file at school will be excluded from school.

Medications

No medications are given to children without a written request signed by a parent or physician. All medications must be supplied by the parent and must be in their original, labeled container with the child's name printed on it.

If your child requires an Epi-Pen or other allergy medication to be kept at school you need to fill out the **Instructions for Medication**.

For Asthma we also need completed the **Child Asthma Plan**; and for allergic reactions we need the **Child Care Emergency Plan for Food Allergic Reactions**, which also needs your physician's signature.

It is the parent's responsibility to check on the expiration dates of the medication throughout the school year.

Illness

If it becomes necessary to send your child home due to illness, we will attempt to contact the parents first. In the event that a parent cannot be reached we will contact the emergency contact person. Although we do not have a sick room, every effort will be made to keep your child comfortable while we make contact with you. It is important that you or your emergency contact person is able to pick up your child during school hours. **It is important that we are able to contact either a parent or emergency contact person at any time!**

If your child is ill please keep him/her at home. Report severe or communicable diseases to us, as we are required to report these occurrences to the Health Department.

When to keep your child at home ...

<u>Colds:</u>	For three to four days after symptoms appear especially if your child feels poorly, has a persistent cough, his/her nose is very full or secretions are yellow or green.
<u>Strep Throat:</u>	From the day your child is diagnosed and 24 hours following the administration of antibiotics.
<u>Chicken pox:</u>	Until all lesions are crusted over. This usually takes seven to ten days. Children are most contagious the day before a rash occurs. Children may still get Chicken Pox even though they have been immunized.
<u>Stomach Flu:</u>	Generally for as long as the child has diarrhea or fever of 100° F or more, and for 24 hours after vomiting.
<u>Vomiting:</u>	If your child throws up during the night, before school, or on the way to school, please do not bring him/her to school for 24 hours.
<u>Conjunctivitis (pink eye):</u>	If the infection is bacterial keep the child home from the time the child's eyes are red and oozy until 24 hours after s/he starts antibiotics. Viral conjunctivitis is contagious for five to seven days.
<u>Fever:</u>	If a child has a fever of 100° F or more or is lethargic or irritable. In order to return to school, a child must be free of fever for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication.
<u>Impetigo and Scabies:</u>	Children need to stay home until infection is gone or we receive a written notification from Doctor.
<u>Hepatitis,</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These are very serious diseases and we need to be notified immediately when diagnosis is made.• Your child needs to be kept home and cannot return until we have written notice from your child's doctor.
<u>Measles,</u>	
<u>Meningitis,</u>	
<u>Mumps, Rubella,</u>	
<u>and Tuberculosis:</u>	

Safety

Safe Student Transportation: If any staff member of Bellevue Montessori School feels that the adult picking up a child is not capable of driving home safely, i.e. inebriated, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the child's safety, like calling another family member or the police.

Bellevue Montessori School does not provide any kind of transportation to or from school.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse: All staff members of Bellevue Montessori School will report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to Child Protective Services.

Safety in the Traffic Lanes and Parking Lot: If you must get out of your car with your child, please hold his/her hand at all times.

Pesticide Application: We have a forest environment and pesticides are applied each month on a Saturday. If any other application is required, parents will be notified.

Emergency Situations

The staff of Bellevue Montessori School is committed to the safety and protection of the children in case of any emergency, including natural disaster. Even though the staff's own families are scattered throughout the area, we know our number one obligation is to the children in our school.

In case of an emergency, our priorities are to assess the condition, secure children and staff, and provide aid as needed. To ensure security and safety, the buildings will be locked until we are able to account and provide immediate care for all students and staff. We then can begin a safe and orderly dismissal of students to parents. There is no possible way we can give you a time frame, as it would depend on the conditions of the emergency.

Classroom evacuation plans are posted in each individual classroom by the exit door and on the bulletin board in the office.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are conducted and recorded once a month. Fire and evacuation safety is also part of our curriculum.

Students and staff conduct regular "duck and cover" drills for potential earthquake threats.

Emergency Response Plan

A copy of the **Emergency Response Plan** is on the website.

Office Policies

Sign-In/Sign-Out

All adults entering the school building or school grounds must sign in at the front desk and receive an identification badge while on school grounds. You must also return the identification badge and initial the sign out sheet when leaving. No unauthorized adults are allowed on campus and observation of any stranger is immediately reported to the office. Only adults doing business with Bellevue Montessori School are allowed in the building.

Children's Records

Parents can access their child's progress report at any time.

Bellevue Montessori School is a three-year program. Teachers fill out recommendation forms only for children in kindergarten or in their 3rd year of attendance. Please give the teacher the form with an addressed envelope complete with adequate postage. Because of confidentiality, the form will be directly mailed to the school requesting the information. Out of respect for the teacher's time please allow a minimum of 2 weeks to complete the school questionnaires or recommendations.

Every attempt is made to keep our enrollment records current. Please notify us of any changes of address, telephone numbers, email addresses or emergency information. Your emergency contact person must be available for pick up during school hours if you are unable to do so.

School Closure

Occasionally school has to be closed because of inclement weather or power outages. In November, we send home complete information concerning school closures. We belong to schoolreport.org and, by checking this website, you can obtain accurate information. If we aren't listed, school is open. The voicemail message on our telephone is changed daily by 6:30 AM with up-to-date information regarding school closures. Missed days are made up at the discretion of the Director.

Non-discrimination Policy

Bellevue Montessori School welcomes all children. We do not discriminate with respect to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, or physical ability.

Cultural Diversity

Bellevue Montessori School celebrates the diversity of all ethnic and religious backgrounds of the children in our community. We do not prescribe to any specific religious organizations or practices. However, we do invite all families to share with us their ethnic, cultural or religious observances.

DSHS Posting

The following information is posted in the office as required by DSHS:
License, monitoring checklist, compliance agreement, staff names, schedule and snack guidelines

Posted in each classroom are:
Staff names, schedule and evacuation diagram

Confidentiality

Photography: Please inform the school in writing if you do not wish your child to be photographed while at school. Parents who request that their child not be photographed also may not take photos of their own or other children at school.

Addresses: If you obtain either mailing or email addresses of staff or children, please use them only for personal use and not for any other purpose.

Classroom Supervision

The mission of the classroom teacher at Bellevue Montessori School is to provide a warm, nurturing, and safe Montessori learning environment where self-concepts are enhanced, independence and individuality are encouraged.

The classroom teacher has full charge of his/her students and agrees to apply diligently, and without compromise the Montessori methods and philosophy. Teachers also agree to implement the curriculum as directed by the Director and Assistant Director.

Students are always under the supervision of staff. Volunteers supplement, rather than replace, staff members.

Volunteers

Parent volunteers are welcome in our school. Please speak to your classroom teacher about volunteer opportunities. All volunteers must complete a background check (form is available at the main office), sign in/out, and wear an identification necklace while on campus.

Playground Supervision

The playground is actively supervised at all times when children are playing outdoors. Teachers are walking the playground or standing at one of the designated teacher stations.

Activity Club

Activity Club provides before and after school care for students. The program includes structured indoor and outdoor playtime, snacks and circle time that includes songs and stories.

The full benefits of Activity Club are available to students who contract for it for the entire school year. Childcare is provided every school day from 7:15am until 8:40am before school and from 2:45pm until 5:45pm after school. In addition, childcare is provided from 7:15am until 5:45pm on teacher preparation days, conference days, mid-winter break (not including Presidents' Day) and spring break by reservation at no additional charge.

Vouchers:

Any Bellevue Montessori student may participate in Activity Club on an occasional basis, without reservation, before or after school. You may use vouchers to pay for Activity Club, as follows.

- **A Morning Voucher** can be used for care any morning from 7:15am until 8:40am.
- **An After School Voucher** can be used for care any afternoon from 2:45pm until 5:45 pm (or any portion thereof).
- Morning or afternoon vouchers may be purchased in groups of five to a book or care for one morning or one afternoon may be paid by check.
- **When school is not in session but Activity Club is open**, there may be a few openings for children who do not have a School Year Activity Club contract. Reservations for these sessions must be made at least 10 days in advance. The cost is **\$65.00/day (8:00 – 2:45)**. Before and after school care will require the appropriate vouchers. Please call the administrative office at 425-454-7439 for reservations.

Late Pickups:

Pickups after 5:45pm are charged a **\$10.00 fee plus \$1.00 per minute**.