



Parent Handbook

“Where Children Love to Learn & Grow”

702 South Harrison Street, Aberdeen, SD 57401

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The Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. was established in 2009 to educate children ages three to six years old. Surrounded by a beautifully prepared Montessori environment, the school provides children with a rich source of educational materials to facilitate individualized learning through the senses. The Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. is an affiliate member of the American Montessori Society and the International Montessori Council. The South Dakota Department of Education has accredited our school as a certified private school for kindergarten. The school is also a non-profit corporation totally supported by tuition. This corporation is allowed to accept donations for the purpose of tax benefits to donors.

School History: Susan Dalager started the first Montessori School in Aberdeen in 1985 with the opening of the Montessori Educational Center. The school held full day classes with an after school program. The school hosted Montessori training workshops through the Great Plains Montessori Training Program in Omaha, NE, and was a placement site for student teachers in the NSU Early Childhood program. The director moved in the late 80's and returned to Aberdeen in 2009 to establish the Montessori School of Aberdeen at the current location of 702 South Harrison Street. The new location is conveniently close to nature walking trails, parks, the senior center and many interesting field trip locations.

The Director: The School director is Susan Dalager. Her credentials include: a B.S. Degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Early Childhood Education from Northern State University. Her Montessori training involved a two year program completed through Mid-America Montessori Teacher Training Institute in Omaha, Nebraska. Upon completion of the program, a Pre-primary credential was issued from the American Montessori Society. Susan has been involved with Montessori education since 1979, she has had the opportunity to visit and teach in various Montessori schools through the United States during her 30+ year career. Susan holds a South Dakota teaching certificate with a Kindergarten and Early Childhood Endorsement, she is a member of the American Montessori Society, the International Montessori Council, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Objectives: We believe that Montessori education begins with a deep respect for children as unique individuals and concern for their social and emotional development.

Children attending the school will be exposed to a method which will facilitate the growth of inner discipline and later more complex reasoning through the free choice and organized use of didactic materials within an atmosphere conducive to these ends. Thus, the goal of Montessori education is to help children achieve their potential without pressure or competition, to challenge them at their own pace, and to respond to each child's individual needs.

Admission: The school has a non-discriminatory admissions policy for children approximately 3 to 6 years of age. *Montessori School of Aberdeen is a non-profit organization that admits and welcomes students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin and does not discriminate in admissions or any area of school administered activities.* A limited number of children with special needs will be admitted on an individual basis.

Parents desiring to register their children for enrollment are to contact the school office and arrange to bring the child to the school for a visit/interview. Each prospective student is required to be interviewed by a certified staff member. An application, student profile, photo/field trip permission form and a copy of the child's immunization form must be submitted before entering school.

Transportation: Transportation is the responsibility of the parents. If you have arranged with another parent to be involved in a carpool, please let us know. If someone other than a regular driver is to transport the children, a written note must be sent to inform us. **CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON.** The safety of the children is our first concern.

Excursions: Excursions will be planned to enhance the child's learning from time to time. Transportation will be provided by volunteer parents. Parents will be required to sign a release form prior to their child's participation in the event. The main purpose of the release is to ensure that the parents have been informed and consent to their child's attending the function. Parents must leave a car seat for the child to be transported to the field trip. Please wear your Montessori T-shirt on field trip days!

Arrival and Dismissal: Upon arrival, please drive up to the front of the school and park. A staff member will assist your child from the car to the school. If you need to come into the school, please park your car ahead of the front sidewalk to allow other arriving students safe access to the building. Dismissal follows the same procedure as arrival

with the exception of the afternoon dismissal. PM DISMISSAL: 2:45 Please park your car and come into the school to escort your child to your car.

Please be respectful of our school hours. THERE WILL BE LATE CHARGES AFTER 11:30 & 3:00.

Arrival 8:00–8:15 and Dismissal 11:15–11:30 AM and 2:45–3:00PM.

Classroom Observations: Parents are welcome any time in our classroom. Scheduled observations of the children are required and will be arranged starting in November. A visitation consists of spending at least an hour in the classroom and another 15 minutes discussing your observations with the director. Observations will occur prior to conference week. See the observation information at the end of this handbook.

Conferences: Conferences are scheduled for each child twice a year. These are of one half hour duration. Please respect the time allowed for your appointment. If additional time is needed, a further conference may be scheduled. IF YOU WISH TO TALK TO A TEACHER AT ANYTIME, KINDLY CALL TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT. ☺ If a teacher feels she needs information from you or wishes to give you information, you will be contacted for a conference. Conferences are at all times highly confidential conversations between the school and you. No written evaluation of your child will be offered except at the end of the year or upon your request when your child leaves the school. Finally, all information concerning your child is confidential and will not be released to anyone unless we obtain written approval from you prior to the release.

School Meetings: The school holds an orientation meeting for parents in August and two to three times during the year. Please see the school calendar or newsletters for dates. There are opportunities for helping with additional school activities and special projects throughout the year.

School Clothing: In addition to being neat, comfortable and appropriate for the weather, school clothing should completely washable and easy for the children to manage by themselves. PLEASE LABEL ALL REMOVEABLE CLOTHING SUCH AS JACKETS, SWEATERS, HATS, MITTENS, SNOWPANTS AND BOOTS. Please send a change of clothing in a zip lock bag and label with the name of the child.

Personal Belongings: Candy and gum may not be brought to school. Toys and jewelry should remain at home since they tend to distract the children and are sometimes taken home by other children or lost. Please assure your child that his toys are for home use and that at school he has special “work” to do.

Please check your child’s pockets to see what they contain before school. Check especially for the small “home” items and kindly check when he returns from school for unfamiliar objects. These items may be a part of school equipment. Many of the Montessori materials are imported from the Netherlands and the loss of one small part may mean the material cannot be used. Cost of replacement is very high. Do not think your child is stealing. The children think of this as “my school” and sometimes they feel that they can take things from school to home.

Please DO allow the children to bring in very special items such as rocks, shells, caterpillars, etc. that relate to school work or are educational in nature. Please send a note if these items need to be returned right away as we would like to keep them so each child gets a chance to observe and explore at their leisure.

Nourishment: Our school is dedicated to installing healthy eating habits with our children. Healthy food not only enriches the body but also the mind. We strive to make healthy choices at school and ask that you do the same at home as well.

Our goal: We strive to provide our children with snacks free of preservatives, food colorings and refined sugar. Please help us to reach those goals.

A monthly snack calendar will provide names of children who are in charge of bringing snack during the month. Please allow the children to bring healthy snacks to share. Fruits, vegetables, crackers, string cheese, yogurt, cereal & dried fruit mixes and natural fruit juices are good examples of snacks the children enjoy. As a part of Practical Life the children are also given the opportunity to prepare breads, fruits and vegetables to share with others throughout the day. To start out the year, we will be contacting you to bring in specific items that we will be using for snack throughout the month.

Birthday Parties: We enjoy celebrating your child’s birthday with a very simple party and a candle-lighting ceremony. If you wish to do so, kindly send muffins/cookies (preferably “healthy” cookies which you have made with your child) and party napkins

for the number of children in the class. As an introduction to history, we ask you to make a “time line of life” for your child to bring to school on their birthday. Please send in a picture for each year of your child’s life for the “time line of life”. You may join us at 10:00 that day for the ceremony. Pictures or videos may be taken at that time.

*Please send all birthday party invitations through the mail unless you are planning to invite every child in the class. We only ask this to prevent hurt feelings of the children who were not invited. Thank you.

Absolute Ground Rules: The school operates on the assumption that everyone in the school will take good care of every person. To this end these basic behaviors are forbidden:

- **No child or adult will hurt another in any way.**
- **No child or adult may disturb the work of another.**

The purpose of ground rules is to aid the development of self-respect and respect for others. The child who is not able to abide by the ground rules will be isolated from the activity to watch the other children who are in the room abiding by the ground rules. When the child feels that he can participate and is ready to use ground rules he may rejoin the class. No physical punishment is used. If the removal time does not work and the behavior continues to be detrimental to the class there is a clear method of procedure, which is as follows:

1. The parents will be called for a special conference with the teacher/Director.
2. The conference will serve the purpose of exchanging ideas to help the child. If there is a serious question of whether the child can function happily in this school, the school may set a limited “probationary” period of one to four weeks to try to work out the problems.
3. At the end of the probationary period, the parents and the Director will then hold a personal conference to make the decision as to what further action should be taken to best meet the needs of the child.

Illness/Accident: The school prohibits attendance of a child during an illness. When you have verification of the fact that your child has a communicable disease, please call the school immediately, so that a note may be sent home to inform other parents. Please keep your child home until **48 hours after medication has been started**. We would prefer that we not administer medication. If absolutely necessary, we will administer medication only if the prescription and the signed permission slip is given to the Director. The permission slip will indicate the name of the medication, dosage amount, and time to be given. The medicine must be in the prescription container. A

log of the medicine to be administered will be kept. The teacher as well as a second person will verify the dosage and will initial the log each time medication is given.

In case of an accident at school, you are called immediately after first aid is given. If you cannot be reached, the emergency number you indicated will be called. If that person is not available, your child's doctor will be called. In the case of minor accidents, a band-aid will be applied for cuts or scrapes and an icepack for bumps. A report will be given to parents at the end of the school day.

Special Information from Home: In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing the Director as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. We will accept your judgment as to the kinds of changes which may affect your child's behavior, security, and general well-being. Common causes of distress include: either or both parents being away from the home; illness of either parent; illness of a sibling; any hospitalization; accident or death in the family; new caretaker, or any new employee, move or death of a pet.

We will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment which may affect your child as well.

Special Services –All children who receive special services from the Aberdeen school district are required to sign Consent for Release of Information form to help us better meet the needs of your child.

Donations Of Time –The school would benefit greatly by each family choosing a way to donate their time and or services in helping the school with special projects. Involvement in the school will give you a better understanding of the Montessori environment and the activities your child is involved in. Our school is a nonprofit corporation supported entirely on tuition, donation and fundraisers. Donations of time help us keep our tuition costs down and are very much appreciated. One of our newest projects is our school library. See Matty Orr to coordinate a time to help to inventory and organize our expanding book collection! 😊

Communications – Our website www.montessoriaberdeen.com is the place to find monthly information from our newsletters and snack calendars which are posted at the beginning of each month. Our newsletters are great way to keep track of our monthly activities, birthdays and upcoming events. We also will post monthly information and pictures on Facebook to help keep you connected.

Calls/Messages – during school hours if you find it necessary to call during classroom hours please leave a message at 605-725-2269. We will check messages during recess and call back as soon as possible. For emergencies or calls during nature walks or field trips please call 605-228-6655.

Additional forms included in this handbook; tuition agreement, photo release form, field trip release form, and birthday time line procedures, *daily* schedule, classroom observation information.