

PARENT HANDBOOK

2009-2010

Arbor

Montessori School

*Changing the World
Today and Tomorrow*

Welcome to Arbor Montessori School!.....	5
Arbor Montessori School’s Parent-School Partnership Agreement.....	7
Arbor Montessori School’s Mission Statement	13
School Values	16
School History	18
Accreditation and Memberships	19
Montessori History.....	20
Background Reading List.....	21
School Administration	26
Faculty Information	29
Full Faculty and Staff Roster.....	31
Parent Involvement.....	34
Arbor Community Council	34
Parent Involvement: How to Make a Difference	36
Arbor Montessori School Board of Trustees and its Committees	36
Fundraising Programs	38
Community-Building Events.....	39

Parent Support.....	41
School Programs	44
Additional After-School Programs	49
Arbor’s Elementary Outdoor Program	50
Class Outings.....	52
Student Assessment	53
Homework	56
Transitions and Classroom Placement	58
Admission Policies and Procedures.....	65
Financial Aid Information	69
Attendance and Tardiness	73
Getting to and From School	74
Communication	82
Classroom Life.....	88
Observations.....	88
Parent/Teacher Conferences	89
Classroom Visits.....	89
Nutrition	90

Birthday Celebrations.....	91
Clothing.....	91
Possessions: Primary Classes.....	93
Tasks Children Can Do to Learn Responsibility	94
Playground Guidelines.....	100
Student Support.....	100
Policy for Grounds for Dismissal from Arbor Montessori School.....	108
Arbor’s Support and Resolution Procedures	109
Policy of Rules of Usage at Arbor Facilities	111
Health and Safety	112
Dispensing of Medications	113
Contagious Diseases.....	114
When to Keep Your Child Home.....	114
Immunization Records	115
Insurance and Liability	116
Emergency Evacuations	117
Observation Tips.....	118

Welcome to Arbor Montessori School!

A new year offers us an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of our hard work and accomplishments and to look forward to the future. Reflection brings gratitude for the exemplary school that our community has created and provides enthusiasm as we recommit to the important work we do together in the community.

Montessori education is, at its essence, a movement for world peace with an implicit peace curriculum. The values of respect and community are core principles. They are deeply connected to the overall curriculum and create cooperative classroom environments. Children have opportunities for social encounters that foster teamwork, caring and compassion. Our collective work is essential to the development of the whole child.

We realize that the example of how we live and work together is the most important aspect of a peace curriculum. So, at Arbor, we are committed to living, learning and teaching principles of community. Arbor strives to be a model community, implementing Maria Montessori's philosophy of respect for individuals, child and adult, in every aspect of school life.

The attitudes and skills for win/win conflict resolution and problem solving that we help children construct in the early years provide the foundation they will need for making peace as adults in the 21st century. Complex social issues and increasing global interdependence place new demands on our capacities to work together. Our students go out into the larger community equipped to be team players, peacemakers

and change agents for a better world. Our graduates give us hope for a positive future. It is important work that we share.

The generosity, hard work and commitment of our parents and staff will continue to fill the pages of Arbor's memory albums with unprecedented growth and notable accomplishments. We are exemplars and trailblazers and will continue to be recognized at a national level as a school of distinction and a respected leader in the Montessori community.

Parents—The Child's First Educators

Children, especially very young children, learn from their environment and from the models around them. Dr. Montessori described the absorbent mind of the young child as a "sponge" with its ability to take in everything present in the environment. It is the adult's role, both at home and school, to prepare developmentally appropriate environments for children, to observe what they need, and to model appropriate behavior. It is also essential that the adults in a child's life are bonded by a similar philosophy and that their beliefs and expectations are harmonious rather than in conflict. It is particularly disorienting for a child whose expectations and routines at home are significantly different from those at school.

Arbor Montessori School's Parent-School Partnership Agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to clarify expectations. What can parents and the school expect of each other as we enter into a partnership to aid the development of your children?

This document aims to articulate the expectations that we agree on: what parents can reasonably expect of the school, and what the school will expect of parents. It also aims to reduce the inevitable misunderstanding and disappointment that result when unstated expectations go unmet.

What does the school expect from parents?

Make continuing efforts to understand and embrace the Montessori approach and to work in partnership with the school.

We want parents who understand and embrace the mission of the school. To that end, we help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information as part of the admission process so that parents can make an informed decision in choosing to enroll their children. Once enrolled, the school expects parents to attend the regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences and parent education events, and to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook and other school publications. Parents must be willing to do their part to enter into the partnership by helping to unify their child's experience at school and at home.

When parents choose to enroll their child in Arbor, they agree to support our mission statement, follow rules and guidelines set out in the Parent Handbook, and abide by Arbor's policies. We have at our foundation the Montessori philosophy and all decisions are made within that framework.

Demonstrate respect for all adults and children, the school, and the school's programs.

Model respect for your children, their classmates, other parents, teachers and other school staff; essentially, for everyone associated with the school. Respect begins with civility and deepens into trust. Our fundamental guideline for the children is, "Respect yourself, others, and the environment." We expect the same from adults, parents, and school staff, at all times and in all relationships with the Arbor community. Support your child by speaking of his/her teachers, classmates, and school in positive terms. Respect and abide by the school's policies and procedures, honor your commitments, and look for ways to make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

Strive to parent according to Montessori principles.

Learn as much as you can about Montessori philosophy as it applies to the preparation of your child's home environment as well as the way that you parent. Often this begins with the principle, "Never do something for your child that he can do for himself." Encourage and allow your child to engage in the many simple tasks of practical life that she can do for herself.

Maintain active, direct and respectful, communication with the school.

Read communications that are sent home electronically or in print, including the weekly *Arbor Update*, the calendars, our website (www.arbormontessori.org), and the *Montessori Observer*. These are the primary forms of communication for parents and provide vital information. We try to be as accurate about dates and times as we can. We continue to listen to parents as we seek to improve communication at Arbor Montessori School.

Please inform the school in a timely fashion of any relevant changes in your child's life. Active communication involves parents sharing observations and concerns about their child with the child's current teacher. Remember the principle of respect – even when there is disagreement, disagree respectfully. For further communication guidelines, please refer to our Parent Handbook.

What can parents reasonably expect from the school?

Arbor strives to fulfill its mission as a Montessori school.

As a Montessori school, we are different from traditional schools. Our first commitment is to the development of the whole child. We guide each child to think for himself. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are important, yet they represent only one dimension of our aspirations for your child; equally important is your child's social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development.

Children in our classes experience choice and freedom—within limits—during a school day. Choosing his own work, having the freedom to shape it, following that work to completion either independently or in cooperation with others, the Montessori child identifies his interests and develops his individual gifts.

We treat each child with dignity and respect and expect that she will treat others with the same respect. We see each child as an individual and strive to provide an environment that helps develop each child's unique gifts. With freedom comes responsibility, and each child learns to balance personal freedom with a sense of responsibility to herself, to others, and to the community.

We aim to maintain open, honest, timely, and respectful communication with you about your child and about information affecting the school community.

There are two regularly scheduled parent-teacher (or in the case of middle school, parent-teacher-student) conferences each year. Included for each is a written summary and progress report. In the event of special concerns, your child's teacher will contact you by phone, email, or in person. In addition to conference reports, classroom teachers will communicate with you via classroom newsletters, email messages, and short reports as needed for individual children.

Each Arbor teacher is a well trained professional. His or her evaluations are confidential and based on direct observation and work with your child.

School-wide communication comes through the weekly *Arbor Update*, as well as the Parent Handbook, calendar, *The Montessori Observer*, and other occasional letters and publications.

We strive to ensure that the environment is physically and emotionally safe and supportive, as well as aesthetically beautiful.

Dr. Montessori said that the first responsibility of the teacher is to prepare the environment. Montessori materials should correspond to the developmental characteristics of the child at each level, and those materials must be attractive to the child: correct in size, aesthetically pleasing, well maintained, and complete. The entire environment must appeal to the child and inspire his work.

We work hard to ensure that the school building and grounds are physically safe, secure and well maintained.

We strive to make the environment emotionally supportive and safe for every child. This does not mean that there are no problems. It does mean that we will work with your child in developmentally appropriate ways to deal with problems as they arise.

The school maintains accreditation by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and high training and professionalism among its faculty and staff.

Arbor is accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale which is the organization founded by Dr. Montessori. This organization represents the most exacting

standards of excellence for Montessori schools. We are also a member of the Southern Association of Independent Schools, the Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools and the North American Montessori Teachers' Association. All our primary and elementary teachers have a post-graduate diploma from an AMI teacher-training center. Middle school teachers attend the Orientation to Adolescent Studies program sponsored by NAMTA and may also be AMI trained.

Our school fosters a culture of professional growth in many ways. Teachers work with coordinators to set goals at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the year participate with their level coordinator in a written self-evaluation. Each staff member has a faculty education fund (FEF) that they may use for conferences or other professional growth opportunities. The school sponsors faculty education in-service and a yearly retreat. Every three years, AMI consultants visit the primary and elementary classrooms as part of the formal accreditation process. Middle school staff participates in a yearly consultation with a representative from NAMTA.

In your interactions with administrative staff, you can expect professional, courteous, and business-like conduct, as well as mutually respectful communication.

The head of school, level coordinators, business administrator, auxiliary director, development director, director of communications, and support staff comprise the administration of the school. In making decisions, administration will focus on the interest of the individual

child in balance with the needs of the school.

Arbor Montessori School admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, family structure or sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, family structure or sexual orientation in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and load programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Arbor Montessori School's Mission Statement

The mission of Arbor Montessori School is to develop the unique capabilities of each child through supportive relationships, joyful learning and meaningful work in a Montessori environment. We seek to foster independence in each child, preparing him or her to contribute with integrity to the community of the larger world.

I. Philosophical Foundations and Primary Goals

Our goal at Arbor Montessori is to develop the unique capabilities of each child, allowing him or her to take a positive, productive place in the larger community. While the child is the center, he or she is not the limit of our school. Parents, teachers, administrative staff and facilities form a circle of community within which the child's growth takes

place.

We seek to accomplish this goal by developing an excellent faculty, staff, and environment for learning; fostering parental understanding, support and involvement; and applying Montessori principles to the entire Arbor community.

Arbor strives to be a model community, implementing Maria Montessori's philosophy of respect for individuals, child and adult, in every aspect of school life.

Arbor will continue to meet the standards established by Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

II. Who We Serve

Arbor wishes to provide a Montessori learning environment for children from birth to adolescence. It serves families who are committed to Montessori education, and who share our stated goals and values. This is our common ground.

Within this common ground, we wish to extend ourselves to make our school ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse.

Our first priority in growth is to serve enrolled children through the current program.

The size of the Arbor community is bounded by the desire to meet our stated goals and to preserve the quality of the Arbor community.

III. Principles of Governance

Arbor makes policy in two ways. Policy which relates to teaching and the classroom is made by the AMI Teachers Team. All other policies are made by the Board of Trustees.

These bodies desire to make decisions by consensus. When this is not possible, the majority prevails.

Governance is based upon democratic principles and open discussion within the framework of Arbor's philosophy and goals.

IV. Tasks of Major Importance

The degree to which we meet our goals depends in large part upon the number and quality of the people who work as paid teachers and staff and as volunteers for Arbor. We want them to be well trained and thoroughly imbued with the Arbor philosophy, but also open to change when it is consistent with those values. We should strongly support these people with the money, training, help and materials they need.

We are committed to providing children who attend Arbor with a physical environment that can support and enrich Montessori education.

Arbor should help parents and families, both those new to the school and those already part of it, meet needs that relate to children in ways consistent with the Montessori philosophy.

Arbor should extend itself and its insights to the Montessori community, other teaching professionals, and to the local

community.

School Values

Arbor Montessori School is a community of learners--parents, children, and staff--actively engaged in what Maria Montessori called "an education to life." Although we represent a rich diversity of backgrounds and opinions, we share a commitment to the values underlying our special approach to learning. In a climate of mutual respect and support we each strive to develop and support these values in ourselves and others:

Attitudes toward Work and Learning

To be self-directed, to be able to initiate activities, set goals, organize time, and complete projects

To have the determination to try, to be capable of working to the limit of one's ability in everything one does

To be persistent, to struggle with difficult work for long periods of time with few visible rewards, to take disappointment in stride

To think logically and rationally, to evaluate information and seek out different opinions and facts before making a decision

To be creative, using imagination to generate fresh and new ideas in all areas

To love learning, to find knowledge interesting in itself, to pursue interests with enthusiasm and for fun

Attitudes toward Self and Others

To recognize one's self as being special and to acknowledge the unique and special character of every other person

To be self-evaluative, to have realistic knowledge of one's own strengths and weaknesses, not ignoring nor dwelling on them

To have a sense of humor that does not rely on putting down others

To develop a personal code of ethics and to remain true to these values under emotional or group pressure

To be able to work with others to accomplish a goal, to learn to contribute ideas, to listen to others, and to compromise

To be responsible, not only in the sense of being reliable, but also able to take into account the effect of an action before performing it, and then being answerable for it afterwards

To balance development in emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical areas

Attitudes toward Society

To understand the inter-dependence of humans, animals, plants, and the natural systems of the Earth

To have knowledge of and respect for the different ways humans have met their physical and spiritual needs over the ages and in different contemporary cultures

To recognize that it is not helpful to label personal choices as right or wrong

To be able to communicate clearly and comfortably with individuals of all ages and backgrounds

To be courteous, caring and respectful toward others, to know how to behave appropriately

To be able to use a variety of effective non-violent techniques for resolving conflict

To accept responsibility for making a contribution to benefit future generations

School History

Arbor Montessori School was founded in 1970 by ten newly trained Montessori teachers and was located in several rental spaces around the city. The school was originally named Montessori Child Development Center; the name was changed to Arbor Montessori School in 1987 when we purchased the La Vista Road property.

In 1976, an elementary program was added to the already thriving primary program and in 1997 the adolescent environment was initiated. In 1987, the LaVista campus was built to house two primary classes, three elementary classes, and in 1998, the middle school program. Arbor Montessori School, a non-profit corporation, has two campuses, one on

LaVista Road in Decatur, and one near Emory University.

We enroll approximately 300 students in our four primary classes (ages 2.5 to 6), three lower elementary classes (ages 6 to 9), two upper elementary classes (ages 9 to 12), and one middle school program (ages 12-14).

Accreditation and Memberships

Arbor has been accredited (recognized or associated) by the Association Montessori International since its founding. AMI accreditation affirms that member schools meet its rigorous standards before receiving and renewing accreditation. Every three years, AMI consultants make a series of evaluation visits to the school. Currently, AMI does not offer accreditation at the middle school level but our teachers have been active participants in the North American Montessori Teachers' Association (an affiliate of AMI) orientation to adolescent studies.

We also hold memberships in the Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools and the Southern Association of Independent Schools.

We maintain communication with other Montessori schools through the nationwide Montessori Administrators Association and locally through the Montessori Administrators Group.

Arbor Montessori School is licensed by Bright from the Start. The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning inspects the All Day primary class, early morning care and our after school program, making sure that we meet the standards

required by the State of Georgia. Parents who have questions about this licensing should contact our auxiliary programs director, Mickey Phillips-Black.

Montessori History

In 1907, a young physician, Dr. Maria Montessori, opened a small school in Rome, Italy's inner city. The school was unlike anything that had existed previously. It was a bold move. It was based on a daring idea. It was formulated through observing hundreds of children. It was simply this: Children Teach Themselves.

Dr. Montessori expanded her audacious idea into a universal vision. Coupled with a carefully crafted classroom approach informed by her beliefs, Maria Montessori developed an educational method that is now celebrated around the world.

Maria Montessori was a visionary, and a woman who led an extraordinary life. As the first woman to graduate from the University Of Rome School Of Medicine, Dr. Maria Montessori gained recognition at a young age for her work in math and the established sciences. She also pursued study in the newer disciplines of the day, anthropology and psychiatry, two areas of interest that would be of great value to her in her work as a physician and scientist.

Her approach to education was based on her observations, in conjunction with her background in psychology, as well as her belief that the education of children was the means to create a better society. She observed children around the

world and found that the laws of development she had recognized in Italy were universal and inherent in children of all races and cultures. The Montessori approach to education continues to be respected and practiced internationally today.

To be a woman actively practicing medicine in the Italy of 1896 was a remarkable enough achievement to bring public acclaim and notoriety. Yet it was her gift to children—her gift of truly seeing, understanding, and respecting children—that led to her greatest accomplishment: development of a unique approach to the education of children. Her approach remains as powerful, inventive, and child-responsive today as it was in 1907 when she opened her first school. (AMI website: www.amiusa.org).

Background Reading List

To learn more about the Montessori approach we suggest the following titles, many of which are available for checkout in the office:

Montessori, Maria

The Secret of Childhood

Ballantine, 1982

The Absorbent Mind

Owl Books, 1995

Education and Peace

ABC-Clio, 1992

Montessori, Mario, Jr.

Education for Human Development

ABC-Clio, 1992

Lillard, Paula P.

Montessori Today

Random House, 1996

The Science Behind the Genius

Oxford University Press, 2005

Futrell, Kathleen

The Normalized Child,

North American Montessori Teachers' Association

Kahn, David

What is Montessori Elementary?

North American Montessori

What is Montessori Primary?

Teachers' Association, 1995

Moudry, Sarah

In a Montessori Home: A parent's guide to preparing the home for children birth to three

North American Montessori
Teachers' Association, 2008

Orti, Patricia

At Home with Montessori

North American Montessori
Teachers' Association, 1994

Additional Reading

Standing, E.M.

Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work

Plume, 1998

Wolf, Aline

Peaceful Children, Peaceful World:

The Challenge of Maria Montessori

Parent Child Press, 1989

Declaire, Joan & John Gottman

Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child

Simon & Schuster, 1998

Faber, Adele & Elaine Mazlish

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and

Listen So Kids Will Talk

Piccadilly, 2001

Goldman, Daniel

Emotional Intelligence

Bantam, 1995

Mogel, Wendy

The Blessing of a Skinned Knee

Penguin, 2001

Nelsen, Jane

Positive Discipline: The Classic Guide to

Helping Children Develop Self-Discipline, Responsibility,

Cooperation, and Problem Solving Skills

Ballantine, 2006

Louv, Richard

Last Child in the Woods-Saving Our

Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

Algonquin Books, 2005

Eissler, Trevor

Montessori Madness! A Parent to Parent

Argument for Montessori Education

Sevenoff, LLC, 2009

Lightfoot, Sarah Lawrence

The Essential Conversation-What Parents

and Teachers can Learn from Each Other

Random House, 2003

Useful Catalogs and Websites

The Joyful Child, for Birth to Three

Child of the World, ages 3-12+

The Michael Olaf Montessori Company,

www.michaelolaf.com

Montessori Services – a Resource for Preparing the

Child's Environment

Montessori Services, www.montessoriservices.com

Chinaberry-books and treasures for the whole family

Chinaberry, Inc., www.Chinaberry.com

School Administration

Governance

Arbor Montessori School is incorporated as a non-profit corporation and managed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. The board is governed by the school's articles of incorporation and by the school's by-laws. The board is comprised of a minimum of 18 members, selected from the AMI team, the parent body and the community, plus the head of school. Each trustee is elected to a two- year term. Candidates for board service are evaluated by the Nominating Committee and presented for approval at the April meeting.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the preservation and of the vision and the mission of the school that is stated in our mission statement and in the Statement of Purpose and Fostering Values. The Board's primary responsibility is to maintain the integrity of the school's Montessori educational vision through time and to ensure that the school remains viable to serve future generations. Fiscal integrity, present and future, that is aligned with the vision, is integral to the responsibility of preserving the vision. Each member of Arbor's Board is expected to put aside personal issues to focus on our common mission; the school's policies and decisions support this mission. In the conduct of official business, the Board acts and speaks only as a whole. The board as a whole represents continuity and permanent responsibility.

The board selects and evaluates the head of school, and delegates all responsibility for implementation of policies to the head. The head has the duty to report to the board on

school matters, and is accountable to the board for effective, business-like management of the school. The head of school articulates the mission of the school to its stakeholders and is responsible for the professional quality and behavior of the faculty.

Administration and Support Staff

Administration Team

Jan Deason, Head of School

Dianne Sherrill, business manager, is responsible for budgeting, cash management, accounting, insurance and facilities management. She is a member of the board and works regularly with the Finance Committee.

Level Coordinators

Anu Chandra, primary coordinator, provides support and guidance to the faculty, children, and parents of Arbor's primary classes. Anu meets regularly with prospective and current parents, is in charge of primary level meetings, and is a frequent presenter at parent-education events. She is also a member of the board.

Alison Sherrill, elementary coordinator, provides support and guidance to the faculty, children, and parents of Arbor's elementary classes. Alison meets regularly with prospective and current parents, is in charge of elementary level meetings, and is a frequent presenter at parent education events. She is also a member of the board.

Jacqui Miller, middle school program director, provides support and guidance to the middle school team, students, and parents of our adolescent program. Jacqui meets with prospective parents, guides the middle school teachers in their collaborative work, and is a presenter at parent education events. She is also a member of the board.

Mickey Phillips, auxiliary program director, plans the general outline of enrichment, early-morning care, holiday camps and is the staff liaison for Bright from the Start. She is responsible for these programs being consistent with Montessori philosophy, training and hiring sufficient staff, budgeting, and contracting with families. Mickey interacts with parents and staff to support the students enrolled in these programs. She is also a member of the board.

Development

Martha Addison, director of development and parent volunteers, is responsible for developing and overseeing fundraising campaigns and for assisting the school in securing corporate and foundation grants. She is also responsible for coordinating volunteers and is the staff liaison to the Parent Involvement Committee. She reports directly to the head of school.

Communication/Public Relations

Leslie Richardson, director of communications/PR, is responsible for developing and maintaining channels of communication between Arbor's faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees with the parent body and the larger community. She heads up the marketing of the school and is editor-in-chief

and publisher of *The Montessori Observer*. She compiles and emails the weekly newsletter, *The Arbor Update*, to all parents and staff and is responsible for all website content. She reports directly to the head of school.

Office Staff

Cheryl Howard, bookkeeper, processes payments to accounts, monthly billing and handles the staff payroll.

Cheryl Rogers, administrative assistant, supports the smooth running of school functions on a day-to-day and year-to-year basis. Her duties include insuring that the school is in compliance with state immunization requirements, coordinating major mailings and maintaining permanent enrollment records in our database.

Liticia Weissinger, front desk assistant, is the first voice and first face to greet parents and visitors to the school. She supports the work of school admissions and also provides general clerical support for the administration.

Faculty Information

Educational Background and Training

All teachers from the primary through elementary level hold diplomas from the Association Montessori Internationale. At the middle school level, at least two of the team members also hold AMI diplomas and all have participated in the Orientation to Adolescent Studies conducted by the North American Montessori Teachers' Association. In cases where a Montessori training center is associated with a university, a master's degree can be earned in conjunction with the

Montessori diploma. Even when this is not so, the Montessori training is the equivalent of master's degree coursework.

Professional Development

All faculty members take part in our annual staff retreat and staff development day. In addition, they participate in workshops, attend conferences, and take university courses to further their education. The school supports the ongoing professional development of its faculty by providing both funds and release time.

Faculty are also present on campus for one or two weeks prior to the opening of school in the fall and for at least a week after school dismisses in the summer, in order to complete record keeping and to prepare the classroom environments and teaching materials. A Montessori classroom is a highly enriched and complex environment that demands much time and effort from the faculty to prepare and maintain. Consequently, Montessori schools typically devote more days to preparation than other schools do.

Faculty Changes

The current median tenure for teachers at Arbor is 12 years (many teachers also have years of experience at other schools). At the same time, some faculty turnover is inevitable from year to year. Changes in faculty are formally announced in letters to the parents that are sent out before the end of the school year, usually in May. Any later changes are announced during the summer.

Faculty Recruitment

The school advertises locally and nationally when there are openings. National advertisement would include ads on both the AMI and NAMTA websites as well as in their publications. Members of the personnel committee and appropriate staff interview candidates.

Full Faculty and Staff Roster

Primary classes – ages 2.5 – 6 years

Marian Cooper, lead teacher

Asya Yordanova, assistant

Myesha Green, lead teacher

Carly DiLeo, Nicole Doxie, Heather Muse, assistants

Deedee Murphy, lead teacher

Kathleen O'Connell, assistant

Shiela Pereira-Scruggs, lead teacher

Julie Aiken, assistant

Elementary Classes

Lower Elementary (6-9) – ages 6-9 years

Becca Fernandez, lead teacher

Becky Roberts, assistant

Emilie Mobley, lead teacher

Lora Hall, assistant

Cindy Ragozzine, lead teacher

Heather Waters-Lynch, assistant

Upper Elementary – ages 9 -12 years

Betty Litsey, lead teacher

Emily Ghiz, assistant

Kate Ramsey, lead teacher

Annette Avery, assistant

Middle School – ages 13 – 14 years

Barbara Fox, lead teacher

Annie Frazer, lead teacher

Jacqui Miller, lead teacher

Steve Thorpe, lead teacher

Specialty Teaching Staff

Nancy Fernandez, Spanish teacher upper elementary/MS

Elisabeth Harris, Spanish teacher primary/lower elementary

Jane Lamkin, Language specialist

Patricia O'Keefe-Hutton, Art teacher-elementary/MS

Brenda Strickland, Music teacher-elementary/MS

Enrichment Staff

Katie Bourke, lead teacher

Stephanie Benjamin, lead teacher

Angela Giles, assistant

Parent Involvement

Arbor Community Council

“Putting into Practice Arbor’s Community Spirit”

From the Board of Trustees:

The purpose of the ACC is to discuss and share information about issues that affect the Arbor community. It will provide a nurturing environment that we anticipate will meet the communication needs of parents, enhance the sense of community at Arbor, and celebrate who we are.

The Arbor Community Council (ACC) is a group comprised of Arbor’ Parent Involvement Committee (co-chairs and classroom coordinators) and the AMI Team. The purpose is to discuss and share information about issues that affect the Arbor community.

Through their current coordinating work with parents, classroom coordinators (informally referred to as PICs) naturally hear many questions and concerns. Beginning in the year 2004-5, the role of the PICs expanded to include serving as liaisons between their classrooms and the AMI Team. In their expanded role, PICs are asked to bring questions and concerns of parents in their classrooms to the Arbor Community Council.

The agendas for ACC meetings will be collaboratively reviewed and decided upon between the ACC co-chairs and the administration team as follows:

Parents will submit topics to the co-chair of the appropriate

level (primary, lower elementary, upper elementary and middle school).

Any parent who wishes to address the ACC in person should submit a request to the co-chair of their level.

The co-chairs will meet with the administrative team to establish the ACC meeting agenda.

The agenda will then be sent to the co-chairs and AMI team members.

At least one PIC from each class is expected to attend each ACC meeting, but all may attend if they wish to do so. Each classroom's PICs will decide among themselves who will attend the ACC meetings.

The current year's PICs will ask for volunteers willing to serve as PICs for the following year, dialogue with the classroom teacher about these volunteers, then select from among them the subsequent year's PIC's. Every classroom will have at least three but not more than four PICs.

The agendas for ACC meetings will be collaboratively reviewed and decided upon between the Parent Involvement Committee co-chairs and the Education and Business administrators as follows:

Classroom PICs will submit topics to the Parent Involvement Committee co-chair for their level (primary, lower elementary, or upper elementary/middle school).

If a parent who is not a PIC wishes to address the ACC in person, this request may also be submitted.

The co-chairs will meet with the Administrative Team to establish the ACC meeting agenda.

The agenda will then be sent to all PICs and AMI Team members.

Parent Involvement: How to Make a Difference

Here at Arbor we rely on the gifts of time, talent, and financial support from our families and friends. We want parents who understand and embrace the mission of the school. To that end, Arbor expects your help in numerous areas through volunteer service on a standing Board committee and of classroom activities. If you would like help in determining an area of support that is both meaningful to you and beneficial to Arbor, please contact the Director of Development and Parent Involvement. It is through your generosity and time that programs are developed which benefit our students, faculty and community for years to come.

Arbor Montessori School Board of Trustees and its Committees

The Arbor Board of Trustees directs the work of the Board committees and accomplishes its work through these committees. Arbor Montessori encourages parents who are interested in the decision-making process to join a Board Committee. From the discussions, research, and planning that take place at committee meetings, recommendations may be brought to the Board for consideration.

The standing committees of the Board are the following:

Buildings and Grounds Committee: Oversees the maintenance of the buildings and grounds.

Diversity Committee: Supports a diverse Arbor community through facilitation of recruitment and retention of families from different backgrounds and by support of staff. Special events to highlight diversity are also planned.

Executive Committee: Plans and coordinates the work of the Board of Trustees

Finance Committee: Plans and manages the financial resources of the school and supports the Business Administrator.

Fundraising Committee: Designs and coordinates a plan of fundraising to support the policies and programs which the Arbor Board establishes for the school. The Major Gifts Committee is a sub-committee of the Fundraising Committee and is responsible for developing and implementing plans for major grants and gifts.

Health and Safety Committee: Reviews and provides guidelines so that Arbor provides a healthy and safe environment for students, staff, and visitors, and promotes a healthy lifestyle for all members of our community.

Nominating Committee: Recruits, educates and evaluates members of the Board of Trustees and Committee Chairs.

Parent Involvement Committee: Organizes and oversees the recruitment and training of volunteers.

Personnel Committee: Researches and proposes fair and equitable personnel policies for the Arbor staff.

Planning Committee: Develops long-range and strategic plans for Board objectives.

Fundraising Programs

Each year we are asked to invest in the continued success of our school and to share the excitement as we continue to expand the educational gifts we give to our children. Annual Fundraising revenues are one way we make this happen. Revenues traditionally support Faculty Education, Financial Aid, enhance the general operating budget of the school and also help assure minimum tuition increases. The ability to maintain this exceptional environment where parents can make a difference relies on 100% participation. We expect you to support all programs and to participate in an area that will be meaningful for you while allowing you the opportunity to help create a lasting difference in our community. Please give as you can when contacted.

The Annual Fund Campaign

A tax deductible gift to the Annual Fund is the single most important gift you can make to Arbor. A letter appeal is mailed out each October asking for a financial donation to the school. Pledge payments may be made monthly, quarterly or annually as a single gift payment. Every gift of every size is important to Arbor and to our students.

The Auction

Arbor's second major fundraiser held each spring is a festive, fun-filled evening for Arbor parents and friends. The focal points of the live auction are the beautiful class projects, lovingly created by children and parents. This is a fun way to be involved in Arbor's fundraising as the planning and preparation go on year round.

Giving Partners Programs

The Partnership Programs allow everyday purchases from major merchants in our community to make a difference by earning the school a percentage of your total purchase. Partners included are Kroger, Publix, Box Tops 4 Education, QSP, School pictures (each Fall), School Spirit Items (available throughout the year from the Arbor Store) and more. Visit Arbor's web site for current listings.

Founders Fund Endowment

The Founders Fund endowment was established in 2001 to provide a permanent and lasting resource for faculty and staff enrichment. In addition, this fund serves to sponsor new teachers for Montessori training, and support community education programs. A letter appeal is sent each spring.

Community-Building Events

Welcome Back Coffee: Held in late August, this coffee serves to welcome all Arbor families to a new school year. A light breakfast and coffee are provided while families connect and reconnect to the school community.

Dessert Parties: At these meetings, which are always scheduled at the beginning of the school year, parents meet with their child's teacher to learn practical details of class life. It is also a time to meet other parents and to begin to form the greater adult community that serves the children. Parent class coordinators (PICs) offer sign-up sheets so that parents can choose ways to help either in the class or on a committee.

Middle School Coffee House: Once a month the middle school students host a coffee house for the entire Arbor community. From 7:50am – 8:30am, families and staff gather in the middle school classroom to enjoy fresh baked pastries, a variety of drinks and shop the market goods.

Grandparents' Day: Grandparents and special friends are invited to visit Arbor the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Invitations will be given to parents at the end of October to distribute to grandparents. Guests visit the classroom with their grandchild and enjoy a reception that is hosted by the middle school students. This is a perfect opportunity to help grandparents learn more about Montessori education.

Auction: Held each spring, the annual auction has become a gala event for the adult community and a great way to be part of one of the major fundraising efforts of the year.

World Fair: Each year in late spring, Arbor's Diversity Committee hosts The World Fair, a wonderful whole-school event to celebrate our different backgrounds and cultures. The entire family will enjoy foods, crafts and performances from around the world.

New Parent Night: In May, Arbor hosts an evening event to welcome the next year's new parents. This is an opportunity to gather with faculty, staff, mentors and other new families to begin the journey at Arbor.

Graduation: The eighth year graduation is during the last week of school when The Arbor community comes together to celebrate the graduation of our oldest children. The graduation ceremony recognizes families' commitment to Montessori education and marks their transition from Arbor to other school communities. Although graduation honors our eighth grade students, each one of them represents each child at our school. All parents, family, alumni, and students are invited to attend this profound culminating event.

Parent Support

Parent Education: Adopting a Montessori View

It is essential that all Arbor parents make a habit of attending parent education events offered throughout the year. The purpose of these events is to strengthen the child-parent-school relationships by offering programs and publications that focus on Montessori educational principles and practice, parenting skills, and child development issues.

Dates for these events will be available in the weekly *Arbor Update* and are held at both the Lavista and Emory campuses.

Our parent library (located in the office) also offers books available for loan to parents on various topics including

Montessori philosophy and parenting issues. Please see Líticia in the office to borrow materials

Parent Education Program

Our Coordinators conduct a series of curriculum meetings and morning parent education coffees. These sessions help parents learn more about the Montessori curriculum and familiarize them with Montessori materials. Another parent education opportunity is our Active Parenting course. This group meets once a week for six weeks to discuss parent-child interactions and is based upon Dr. Michael Popkin's program. Active Parenting for Adolescents is also available.

The Administrative Team

The work of the Administrative Team is structured to support and be a resource to the children, the teachers and the parents in the Arbor community. The work done in each of these arenas is varied and changes as the school year progresses. The team is led by the head of school and consists of the primary coordinator, the elementary coordinator, the middle school program director, the director of auxiliary programs, and the business manager. They are committed to ensuring the best possible AMI Montessori education for the children at Arbor. They support the "Golden Triangle" of parent, teacher and child and work in partnership to foster a strong community with shared values and a common purpose.

Communication with the Administrative Team

The classroom teacher is always our parents' first point of contact for questions about their child, the classroom, or Montessori pedagogy. The Administrative Team welcomes questions and input. Please do not hesitate to call, e-mail or stop by the office.

The Administrative Team

Jan Deason, Head of School

Ext. 224, email: jand@arbormontessori.org

Mickey Phillips-Black, Auxiliary Director

Ext. 223, email: mickeyp@arbormontessori.org

Anu Chandra, Primary Coordinator

Ext. 226, email: anuc@arbormontessori.org

Alison Sherrill, Elementary Coordinator

Ext. 223, email: alison_sherrill@yahoo.com

Jacqui Miller, Middle School Program Director

Ext. 242, email: jacquim@arbormontessori.org

Dianne Sherrill, Business manager

Ext. 225, email: diannes@arbormontessori.org

School Programs

Auxiliary Programs

Early Morning Care

Arbor offers early morning care at both locations on an annual five-day-only contract basis. On the Emory Campus, early morning care is from 8am to 8:45am. At the LaVista campus, early morning care is from 7:30am to 8:15am. Space is limited. If, by the published due date, more applications are received than there are spaces, those spaces will be filled by a lottery system. Contracts and fees can be found on the School Forms page of the Arbor website. If we have spaces, students may drop in on a short term basis. You must call the office before the end of the day prior to the drop in day. Children cannot be dropped off at either campus before school begins unless they are signed up for early morning care. Please call the office to sign your child up for early morning care.

Unclaimed Children

If children are still waiting after pick-up time, the following procedure is followed: At Central Campus, the child will be signed in to Enrichment and an attempt will be made to reach the parents. At the Emory location, children remaining beyond 3:15 p.m. will be placed on the Arbor bus and cared for in enrichment at Central Campus and an attempt will be made to contact the parents. Those children will be picked up at Central Campus. Late pick up fees do apply. Parents must pay a late fee of \$9.00 per 15-minute period if they arrive after the conclusion of the usual dismissal time:

Up to 15 minutes: \$9.00

15-30 minutes late: \$18.00

30-45 minutes late: \$27.00

Dismissal Times and Late Pickups

Any pick-up after dismissal time is considered late. What is “late?” Late is: arriving during any part of a 15 minute interval past the end of dismissal time (below). Example: at Central Campus, if you arrive during the interval of 3:16 to 3:30, you will be charged a late fee. If you arrive during the next interval of 3:31 to 3:45, you will be charged for both intervals, and so on. As a courtesy, Arbor grants each family a one-time free 15 minute late pick-up the first time they are late (arriving between 16 - 30 minutes after dismissal.)

Dismissal times:

11:30 to 11:45...Morning LaVista Primary

12:00 to 12:15...Morning Emory Primary

2:30 to 2:45...Afternoon LaVista Primary

6:00...All Day Primary

3:00 to 3:15...Elementary and Afternoon Emory Primary

3:30 to 3:45...Middle School

6:00...Enrichment

Holiday Camp: For ages five and older

In addition to after school care, Arbor offers full-day holiday camp during selected school holidays and teacher workdays. Please check the general school calendar or call the office for specific dates. The registration form and fee schedule are available on the school forms page of the Arbor website. Spaces are limited and on a first come first serve basis.

After School Classes: For ages five and older

Throughout the year, specialty instructors from the community offer optional classes in subjects such as drama, creative movement, art, or chess. These classes vary from year to year and are offered to different age groups and at different levels of expertise. For information on specific classes, registration forms, and fee schedules, please go to the School Forms page of the Arbor website.

Summer Programs

As an independent school, Arbor follows a traditional school year (usually August through May) calendar. When staff is available, and there is sufficient interest, we offer from two to three weeks of Enrichment Day Camp while school is out of session.

Bus Shuttle: For ages five and older

A bus shuttle runs between the Emory Campus and the Central Campus in the morning and in the afternoon. This service is on a five-day-only contract basis. The contracts and fee schedule can be found on the School Forms page of the Arbor website. When necessary, the 14 bus seats are assigned

by lottery with each family receiving one ticket for the lottery. Round trip and staff contracts receive priority. The bus leaves the Emory Parking Lot at 7:50 in the morning and leaves the Central Campus by 3:00 in the afternoon. It leaves at 3:15 from Emory and returns to Central Campus. Students not picked up at Emory by 3:15 will return on the bus to Central Campus and will be signed in to Enrichment. Late fees do apply. Once it starts moving, the bus will not stop for any reason. The bus is also available to transport primary Enrichment students from the Emory campus; the cost is included with the Enrichment fee for these students. When space is available, students may ride the bus on a drop-in basis.

Enrichment: For ages 5 and older

Enrichment is our after school program. It starts at 2:30 for primary, 3:00 for elementary, and 3:30 for middle school students. It ends promptly at 6pm, although you may pick your child up at any time. Please call the office to sign-up for Enrichment. The Enrichment program is available for children ages 5 and above and is located at Central Campus only. Students are grouped by age into Lower Enrichment and Upper Enrichment. This program is under the supervision of our Director of Auxiliary Programs, who supervises the Enrichment staff. This program is after school and includes time spent outside on the playground as well as quiet time inside. Students have opportunities to cook and bake, make arts and crafts, and play organized games. The Enrichment program was developed for children who need care after school hours and is based on the Montessori philosophy. It promotes social interaction and community-

building and offers the same opportunities for independence, freedom of choice, and respect for the environment and each other that are afforded them in the classroom. Our after school program is licensed by Bright from the Start, a division of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. Registration forms and fees are available on the School Forms page of the Arbor website.

Emergency Care

If you have an emergency, we will care for your child after school until someone can pick him up. Please call the office as soon as possible to let us know of your emergency. If you need care on the same day that you call, the drop in fee is \$24.00 for all ages.

Emory Courtesy Care

From 3:00-3:30pm we offer free care for siblings of Emory students only. This service is offered due to the 3:00 pm dismissal time at both campuses and allows parents to pick up at both locations without incurring a late fee. Parents interested in this service must fill out an Enrichment Contract and write “Emory Sibling Courtesy Care” on the form.

After School Play Arrangements

Parents are asked to make prior arrangements for after school play dates. Please alert your child’s teacher and the main office if there is to be a change in pickup, drop-off or bus riding. In order to maintain the classroom work cycle, children may not use the phone to arrange play dates during the school day.

Additional After-School Programs

Athletics

Arbor's athletic program seeks to provide physical and sports activities at Arbor that support the development of each child in a healthful, positive, and safe environment. We also strive to promote the ideal of a lifelong commitment to physical fitness.

Running Club

The Running Club provides an opportunity for students five and older to run at school from 7:45-8:15 in the morning on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Running Club meets year-round except during inclement weather and culminates with the Arbor students running the Peachtree Jr. together in June. Parent volunteers serve as coaches and supporters. Look for information about Running Club in *The Arbor Update*.

Middle School Athletics

Arbor's athletic program at the Middle School level is based on a thorough understanding of the characteristics and needs of adolescents, and is designed to balance an emphasis on team sports with an awareness of the skills, potential, and commitment of each individual player. The program also strives to create an atmosphere of competition without conflict. Should conflict occur, it provides an opportunity to practice conflict resolution skills.

Middle School sports include cross country in the fall,

basketball in the winter and track in the spring. All sports provide equal opportunities for girls and boys, are coached by parent volunteers and are open to all Middle School students, no matter their athletic experience or ability. Sixth-year students may join fall and spring sports teams, and fifth-year students are invited to participate in the practices.

The Arbor Athletic Booster Club is a parent-led group that provides organizational support for the athletic program, fosters community involvement in physical activities, and encourages the Arbor community's support for Arbor's athletes.

Debate

Debate is a wonderful way for students to learn analytical listening, critical thinking, rapid organizing and public speaking skills. Arbor supports a Middle School policy debate team which competes with teams from local public and private schools. Students meet weekly after school to practice. Tournaments are held monthly on Saturdays. Parent volunteers serve as coaches and judges. Sixth year students are invited to join the debate team mid-year.

Arbor's Elementary Outdoor Program

The Outdoor Program is an integral part of Arbor's elementary curriculum designed to provide direct experience of the ecology of this bioregion, develop independence and self-confidence, foster personal responsibility and cooperation, offer challenge and adventure, and encourage environmental awareness and responsibility.

Leadership

One of Arbor's upper elementary teachers or aides accompanies the children on all Outdoor Program trips. The programs are lead by Mark Warren, who has been working with Arbor since 1986. Mark served for 10 years as naturalist and environmental educator for the Georgia Conservancy. He is the author and illustrator of *Magic in the Woods*, and designer of the American Wilderness Awards. The National Wildlife Federation has named Mark a Georgia Conservation Educator of the Year.

About Medicine Bow

The camping trips are held at Medicine Bow, 35 acres of wooded land near Dahlonega, adjacent to the Chattahoochee National Forest. The land offers a variety of native plant and animal habitats for exploration and study. Mark's house is on the property and assures easy access to shelter and telephone in case of emergency.

Lower Elementary

Mark Warren makes several trips throughout the school year to the Arbor campus. He leads small groups of 2nd and 3rd year students in lessons that extend their classroom biology work into practical applications on our property. The children gain an appreciation for the natural world around them and develop a relationship with Mark before beginning their upper elementary camping trips. In the spring the 3rd year students have the opportunity to visit Medicine Bow for a day.

Upper Elementary

Small groups of children spend two days in the fall and three days in the spring camping at Medicine Bow. Students receive instruction in outdoor safety, botany, native animals and their habitats, archery, canoeing, and the uses of native plants for food, medicine, and crafts. They also learn individual and cooperative responsibility in packing their own gear, providing their own shelter and preparing their own meals. *Sixth Year Trip to Cumberland Island*: The sixth year students spend four days camping on Cumberland Island, studying the ecology of Georgia's barrier islands. *Sixth Year River Trip*: The sixth years celebrate three years of canoe training with a whitewater river trip from base camp at Medicine Bow.

Optional Outings

The Parent/Child weekend trips offer parents a special way to spend time with their children. Intergenerational learning activities and games give students an opportunity to show parents what they have learned in the Outdoor program.

Class Outings

Going out on trips is encouraged for elementary and middle school students. Whole-group field trips are rare; outings in the lower and upper elementary are mainly initiated by small groups of children under the guidance of the teacher. The purpose of “going out” is to foster independence by making connections with the world beyond the school community to support ongoing classroom work. Parents will be informed of trips in advance. In middle school, the frequency and variety

of going out experiences increases. In addition to student initiated outings, students regularly shop to support class activities, teachers plan group outings related to a topic of study, and spontaneous outings also occur. Occasionally primary classes, especially afternoon children, will have a field trip.

Use of Personal Vehicles for School Functions

Employees and parents are required to submit a copy of their driver's license and insurance to the office before using their vehicle for school business or school-sponsored activities. In addition, they must also have on file in the office a Safe Driver Application and Agreement as well as a copy of their driver's license.

Employees and parents need to be aware that the school's insurance policies do not cover damage to personal vehicles when those vehicles are used on school business or school-sponsored functions such as class trips or outings. Personal automobile policies will be the only available coverage for damage, and will be the primary coverage for any liability claims. The school's policy will provide secondary coverage for liability claims only, and only after personal policy limits have been exhausted.

Student Assessment

Our primary task is to help children construct themselves to flourish in an increasingly technical and competitive world. Graduates of Arbor Montessori School leave with at least two critically important assets that we hope will sustain them throughout their lifetime: the ability to adapt and a love of learning.

By the time our graduates are in the work force, it is estimated that they will have to change careers at least two or three times during their lifetimes. Improvements in technology will increase the pace of life significantly. How do you prepare children for such a world? We try by enhancing their ability to think logically, to cope with change, to cooperate with others, to pose creative solutions to old problems, to defend their right to their own opinions and values, and to respect the rights of others. Their ability to adapt to change and their love of learning will be the keys they need to open any door of opportunity.

We provide a qualitative evaluation of a child's performance that takes into consideration the whole child, including strengths, limitations, and social, physical, and creative achievements; the education your child receives at Arbor Montessori School extends far beyond basic skills in math and language.

Traditional grades provide a quantitative evaluation of a child's work. Grading creates an environment of winners and losers, undermining the spirit of cooperation and community. Research indicates that grading actually reduces creativity, as students aim for work that will be safe and acceptable to the adult. And therein lies a third powerful reason not to use traditional grades: the children begin to work to please the adult rather than themselves, to work for the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic reward. For these reasons, Arbor does not "grade" children.

In Middle School, students' work is formally assessed in a number of ways including numerical scores, rubrics, performance assessments, portfolios, and written and verbal

feedback. In addition, the Middle School asks adolescents to evaluate themselves. This process is extremely valuable, and provides students with a life-long tool for measuring their own performance against their own standards and the standards of others.

Conference Reports

The teachers who have worked with your child will produce evaluations during the year of your child's performance in the classroom. In primary and elementary, you will receive two written conference reports each year; in middle school you will receive three. These reports will be reviewed with you in person at conferences with your child's teacher in the fall and spring. In middle school, students are present and lead these conferences.

In the fall and spring of each year, you'll have an opportunity to discuss your child's performance at parent/teacher conferences. Throughout the year, if you have questions about your child's progress, please call the teacher for a discussion.

Standardized Testing

Beginning in the fourth year of upper elementary, children participate in nationally-normed achievement tests. The school includes the results with the spring conference report. However, we believe a child has multiple intelligences, not just those measured by achievement tests. And though we regard these tests as a reflection of how your child compares to other children in these areas, we don't believe these tests provide a complete assessment of your child's strengths or limitations.

Outside Assessment and Guidance

The Montessori classroom can accommodate the needs of a wide range of children. Some children are able to receive special attention within the Montessori classroom. However, there are others who are not well served within a Montessori classroom.

The school and its staff are committed to open and ongoing dialogue with parents regarding special concerns about every child's progress. The classroom teacher, in conjunction with the coordinators and the head of school, may, at times, request outside assessment and guidance for working with individual students. The reasons for such a request will vary greatly: often the teacher may need more information about the learning style of a student in order to work with him or her more effectively.

In these cases, the school expects to receive a complete copy of all test results and recommendations and, if possible, to meet with the parents and the diagnostician. The school commits to implement all recommendations consistent with its mission and within its resources; the school expects parents to follow through on recommendations for tutoring, therapy, or other treatment.

Homework

Generally speaking, homework refers to academic work. However, we Montessori educators like to broaden the term: all work that is done at home is homework. It is the work we do for ourselves, to improve ourselves, to pursue our own interests and dreams. This work could be an extension of work done at school, or it could be an unrelated activity or hobby that

is meaningful to us individually. The line between work and play can become blurred here, just as the work the children do at school is often fun.

Homework for the Elementary Child

When children leave Arbor at the end of the school day, we hope they will have time to relax, and we expect they will do some "homework" as well. Our homework expectations for the Elementary children are as follows:

Activities appropriate to family life and the home environment: see "Suggested Home and Family Responsibilities for the Elementary Child," section of this Parent Handbook.

Continuation of both academic work and self-development:

A love of reading is the single best indicator of and influence on academic success. Reading and being read to daily are thus very important for elementary children; consider these activities as standing homework. Projects of the child's own choosing, related to topics being explored in class or to other interests, are also appropriate.

Homework for the Adolescent

Middle school students are ready to add a layer of academic responsibility at home. They are expected to set aside time each school night (Sunday through Thursday) for homework. The amount of time will vary depending on the way the student manages his or her time at school and the time it takes an individual student to complete the work. In their role as advisors, Middle school teachers support students in using planners to record and manage their various commitments.

Transitions and Classroom Placement

Transitions

Primary

For some children, entrance to the primary class is their first school experience. For some, it is a transition from another environment. Independent care of self is one sign of readiness for the primary class: this includes toileting and dressing. We also look to a child's sense of order and independence. The sense of order can be seen in careful handling of classroom materials during the interview process. Independence is shown by the child's successful separation from the parents.

Full Day Primary

When a child in the traditional primary class turns five a transition occurs from the half-day into the full day/afternoon program. Children in the All Day class will transition away from napping and into the afternoon class.

Many children benefit from spending an additional year in primary to gain greater social-emotional maturity or hone academic skills. The decision to remain an additional year in primary is considered jointly by the primary and elementary teachers the coordinators and in consultation with the parents.

Elementary

Lower Elementary

The transition from primary into lower elementary marks the end of the first plane of development and the onset of the second plane. The minimum age for entry into the lower elementary is six years by September 1st.

In determining a child's readiness for moving up into elementary, faculty and the primary and elementary coordinators first consider social and emotional maturity. We also look closely at the child's academic skills: he needs to be reading and writing with fluency to prosper at the elementary level. He also needs to have a strong sense of self-direction and independence, and the ability to work with concentration—alone or in cooperation with a group.

Upper Elementary

The transition into upper elementary occurs when a child enters the second half of the second plane of development, at approximately nine years of age. Each student's transition is considered by the faculty with the elementary coordinator, and in consultation with the parents.

To make this transition successfully, the child must demonstrate increased independence as a student, in both academic skills and personal responsibility. Academically, he needs to be ready for complex research and mathematical problem solving skills. He also needs a high degree of self-direction to be able to consistently choose challenging work. Lastly, he needs to show that he is capable of being a

respectful and cooperative member of the classroom community.

Middle School

Students enter Arbor's Middle School as childhood ends and adolescence begins, at about twelve years of age. This is the beginning of the third plane of development. Students who have completed the work and experiences of the second plane of development, either at Arbor or at other Montessori schools, are ideal candidates to continue their learning and development in our adolescent community. Students who have attended more traditional middle schools will also be considered for acceptance by the middle school faculty and administration.

Students who will successfully transition into the adolescent community will demonstrate a high degree of personal responsibility, respectful engagement with the group, and well-developed academic skills.

High School Transitions

The culminating move for Arbor students is the transition to high school. The middle school program prepares young people well for a successful transition to a variety of independent, parochial, and public high schools. Middle school faculty and administration work with students to prepare and support them in the process of applying, testing, and interviewing at area high schools.

Indicators of readiness for high school include emotional maturity/age, completion of the work the Montessori environment has to offer, successful work management skills, and academic proficiency.

Visits at the Next Level

Every spring, the oldest children in each class prepare to move into the next level at the start of the new school year. They have the opportunity to visit and to work in their new classrooms for two half days and a student in the new class often serves as a host or buddy for the new class member. Elementary children visit their new classrooms in May, after placement decisions have been announced. Rising Middle school students visit individually in January and as a whole class in May.

What Is the Parent's Role During Transitions?

Observation

When your child is about to move into a different level, we recommend that you come and observe a classroom at the next level so that you will have a better understanding about the transition your child will be making. (For specific information about observing the classrooms, refer to “Observations Tips” in the back of this handbook.)

Moving-Up Programs

You can best prepare your child for these transitions by attending moving-up programs such as Elementary and Middle School “Move-Up Nights.” Parents whose children

will be in their last year of primary or elementary are encouraged to attend move up coffees to learn more about Montessori at the elementary or middle school levels. We strongly recommend that parents attend these meetings, as it gives an opportunity to learn about expectations and how to best prepare yourself and your child, as well as get answers to general questions about the beginning of the school year.

Orientation Meetings

In August and September, we have an evening devoted to orientation meetings for parents new to Arbor. These meetings are essential for helping your child get off to a good start, since they will cover both practical information and the Montessori approach.

Listen to your Child

To help prepare your child for a transition, it is important to listen. He will probably express a mixture of excitement and anxiety. Change can be scary; listening to your child's feelings and expressing your support will make a difference.

If you are experiencing that same mix of excitement and anxiety yourself, contact your teacher or level coordinator and allow them the opportunity to listen to your feelings and express their support.

Parents with concerns about whether their child is ready for the next level should contact the teacher. Decisions will be based on the needs of the individual child.

What Does the School Consider During Placement?

Multi-Age Grouping: Building Community

At each level, children are grouped in classroom communities for multiple years. These small communities provide a number of advantages not found in traditional schools. Children work with others who are older and younger than themselves. The older students serve as role models and tutors for the younger students, and in the process they gain confidence in their own abilities and self-esteem regarding their skill level and expertise. The younger ones watch the older ones, and in the process they gain a clear vision of what's expected of them, and have the benefit of working with and learning from their peers as well as the teacher. The classroom community is a direct preparation for life in the family and in the workplace. Communicating and working well with others are important life skills.

Balance of Needs and Learning Styles

Each classroom and middle school advisory group develops its own personality. The placement of children in these communities as they move from one level to another is a very important task. Each community needs a blend of learning and personality styles so that it truly reflects larger communities. Grouping children by their intellectual abilities would defeat the greater goal of establishing a sense of community in the classroom.

Siblings and Friends

Siblings and clusters of friends are not always placed together. A child grows from developing new relationships with others. Building community requires individuals to extend themselves beyond their immediate circle of comfortable relationships.

The Teacher's Role

In traditional school settings, a child's placement in a classroom is often determined by the child's ability to get along with the teacher (and vice versa). Arbor is not a teacher-centered educational system: it is child-centered. When students are moving from one program into another, their assets and strengths are analyzed, and then students are placed in a classroom community that needs their gifts. Placement is determined by matching the skills and needs of the individual with the skills and needs of the community. The teacher is one part of the classroom community.

While the adolescent community continues to be child-centered, the adult fulfills a different role. The middle school advisor coaches and guides the young adolescent through the specific challenges of these years. In addition to considering a student's assets and strengths, placement into advisory groups also strives to match students' needs with the strengths of the advisor so that a supportive relationship can develop.

Commitment to the Classroom Community

Because the composition of a classroom community is selected very carefully, it is extremely rare for children to be transferred from one classroom to another. We ask parents and children to make a commitment to the classroom and to take the opportunity of getting to know other parents and children so that adults can also experience the benefit of a community network.

Parent Requests

The school cannot guarantee that parent requests will be honored for children to be placed in particular classrooms or with a particular middle school advisor. Administration and faculty work hard to make sure that each child is placed in an environment where her needs will be met. If you have particular concerns about your child's learning style during a time of transition, you are more than welcome to meet with the coordinators to discuss those concerns.

Admission Policies and Procedures

Information Meetings and Tours

Information meetings and tours are scheduled between November and February. Please call the office at 404-321-9304 or visit our website at www.arbormontessori.org for dates and times. At least one parent must attend an information meeting before submitting an application.

Application

After attending an information meeting, parents complete an application and return it to Arbor Montessori School, 2998 La Vista Road, Decatur, GA 30033. A non-refundable \$75.00 application fee must accompany the application.

The application deadline is February 15. Applications may be accepted thereafter, as spaces become available. Applying late, however, may make it difficult to attend the necessary information meetings.

Transcripts

We require the two most recent progress reports for all transfer students. These reports are due February 15.

Teacher Recommendations

Parents must sign a confidential teacher recommendation form and send it to your child's current school. This form should be mailed directly to Arbor from your child's current teacher. These recommendation forms are due February 15.

Interviews

After you have submitted an application, you will be contacted within a few days to set up a parent interview with the level coordinator. Assessment interviews/visits for all children will be held in February and March.

Admission Decisions

The AMI teachers and coordinators at each level make admission decisions based the student's application, academic

record, parental commitment to Montessori and the needs of their classes. Admission decisions are sent to students four years and under as soon as the interview process is completed. In adherence to AAAIS (Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools) regulations, admission decisions for all students five years and older are mailed the first week of April.

Admission Policy

Arbor accepts qualified students regardless of race, color, family structure, religion, nationality or ethnic origin. The school accepts those students who will have successful experiences in the program, enhance the classes for which they are applying, and remain in the program continuously through the age of 14 years.

Arbor accepts applications for:

Primary Level (2.5 - 6 years of age)

Children who will be between *2 years, 6 months and 3 years, 11 months* by September 1 of the year they begin school. Half-day and full day applicants must be willing to attend either location.

Children over 3.11 years old who are transferring from another Montessori school.

A child who is in the process of potty training by the March interview, with the expectation that he or she will be daytime-trained by September 1.

Elementary Level (6-12 years of age)

Elementary-age children who have had previous Montessori education.

Middle School (12-14 years of age)

Rising 7th year students-no previous Montessori education required

Typically, applicants will be given priority in the following order:

Qualified siblings of students continuing at Arbor.

Qualified transfer students from other Montessori schools.

All other qualified applicants.

Arbor seeks to create classroom communities that are balanced by gender and age. While the school prefers to admit children at age three or younger, primary students four years and older will be considered on an individual basis, as space allows, with preference given to students with previous Montessori experience.

The school assumes that the Montessori experience is the preferred method of instruction for the family and student making application. If a family withdraws a child before or after the end of Primary, that decision may affect the admission of younger siblings.

All information obtained in the admission process is confidential and will be used only in the admission process. This information will not be available to the candidate,

parents, or anyone outside the school's admission process.

Re-enrollment Review

Arbor expects students to conform to the school's rules and expectations to retain their places. The school reserves the right to refuse admission to, or call for the immediate withdrawal of, a student whose presence is considered detrimental to the school's best interest. The school reserves re-enrollment for students who have shown good work, effort, and attitude. The school reserves re-enrollment for families willing to cooperate with the school.

Before issuing an enrollment contract to a student in the school, the teacher and administrators review the student's academic, attendance and conduct records as well as the family's spirit of cooperation with the school staff.

Tuition Refund Policy

See your child's enrollment contract regarding the school's refund policy.

Notification of Admission Policy Changes

In the event of an admission policy change, parents will be notified via email.

Financial Aid Information

Arbor offers financial aid so that we may enroll and retain students who could not otherwise afford to attend and so that we may increase the diversity of our student body. Arbor Montessori admits students of any race, color, national or

ethnic origin, religion, family structure or sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, family structure or sexual orientation in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Arbor's financial aid funds are reserved for families who have no alternative to requesting assistance.

Financial aid will be awarded on the basis of need. An independent organization, the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) in Princeton, New Jersey, will help with the analysis of a family's ability to contribute toward their child's education.

Financial Aid Policies

1. Arbor's financial aid program is funded by the fundraising efforts of its parent body. Therefore our resources are limited. Eligibility is determined by the Financial Aid Committee and awards are heavily weighted towards elementary and middle school students. Students applying for the primary program are not eligible for financial aid. Every family receiving aid is asked to pay some portion of the tuition; there are no awards for 100 percent of tuition. Financial aid is not automatically renewed. Families who receive aid must reapply each year.

2. Applicants must have a complete folder of required documents in order to be considered for financial aid. Forms should be received by the specified deadlines or the request for financial aid may not be processed.

3. In addition to tax returns, all parents who own a business will complete the Business Statement and return it to Arbor for processing. Parents should also furnish a copy of their current business tax return.

4. In calculating financial need, we will not consider ordinary business or rental depreciation or loss.

5. If a non-custodial parent refuses to submit the necessary information to Arbor, the application for financial aid may not be processed. If the custodial parent has not heard from the non-custodial parent in a period of time, forms may not be required. A letter of verification from a disinterested party (minister, attorney, etc.) may be required. A copy of the divorce decree may be required. Arbor reserves the right to review on a case-by-case basis. If the non-custodial parent furnishes financial information to Arbor, we will provide the non-custodial parent with the award decision. The custodial parent should notify the Arbor office in writing if this is acceptable.

6. In situations where couples are living together but not married, we will require financial information from both parties. If the child is from a former marriage of either party, forms will be required of current family and non-custodial parent and spouse, if applicable.

7. If a child is part of the family due to adoption or artificial insemination, forms will be required as with two-parent families.

When the mother or father does not work and there are no preschool children at home, we will add the cost of the oldest

child's tuition to the total income of the family. We will also do this if a parent returns to college or university and is not working.

9. Should discrepancies be discovered in the information provided to Arbor, we reserve the right to request additional financial information from the parents at any time.

Procedures for Applying for Financial Aid

The following steps have been established to help us make fair and equitable decisions regarding financial aid.

1. Complete the Parents' Financial Statement (PFS) form. The PFS is a form used by the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS). Families may fill out the PFS online (www.nais.org/go/sss) or on paper. The PFS must be submitted directly to SSS by February 15. Also please send one copy to the Arbor Business Office and keep one copy for your files.

2. If you own a private business or farm, you must complete the Business/Farm Statement and return it to Arbor along with completed business tax returns. This form is available online and in the Arbor Business Office. If you have formed a limited partnership, we will need copies of the partnership return and K-1's. We reserve the right to request additional financial information such as balance sheets, cash flow statements, etc.

In the case of separated or divorced families, the custodial parent (and present spouse) should send the Parents' Financial Statement to the SSS in Princeton as described

above. The non-custodial parent (and present spouse) should also complete the Parents' Financial Statement and send it to the SSS in Princeton as described above.

Send these tax documents to Arbor by March 1: 1040 Federal Income Tax Return and your W-2 Form. If you are a new applicant, please also submit your 1040 from the previous year. Do not wait until April to do your taxes. The Arbor Financial Aid Fund Committee begins its review of applicants in March. You should also submit a copy of your child's tax return (1040 with all schedules), if applicable.

5. If your child has assets in a trust fund, you must furnish a copy of the trust agreement.

6. The School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) will send a Report of Family Contribution Form to Arbor. It will be reviewed along with your most current 1040. No award will be made until all forms have been submitted.

7. Financial Aid decision letters will be mailed during the first week in April, along with letters of enrollment decisions for applicants and between mid-March and the first week of April for returning students.

8. If you are awarded financial aid, you need to contact the Arbor office for a customized schedule of tuition payments.

Attendance and Tardiness

Consistent attendance is important. The children who benefit most from the prepared environment are those who attend regularly. There are several reasons for this:

A consistent routine provides security for the young child and a sense of security enables the child to learn more readily.

A child's experiences in the classroom and with the materials are cumulative; consistent attendance bolsters learning.

Your own commitment to your child's presence in school affirms the importance of school and learning. Frequent absences undercut the importance of school in the child's mind and can affect her performance.

To ensure your child's regular attendance, please schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays

Schedule appointments with doctors, dentists and other professionals outside of classroom hours.

Habitual tardiness will first be addressed by classroom teachers. If it continues, level coordinators will contact parents to see how this can be resolved. Excessive absences or tardiness might affect the school's decision to offer a re-enrollment contract to a student. Please see the section regarding Attendance and Tardiness in "Grounds for Dismissal" in this handbook.

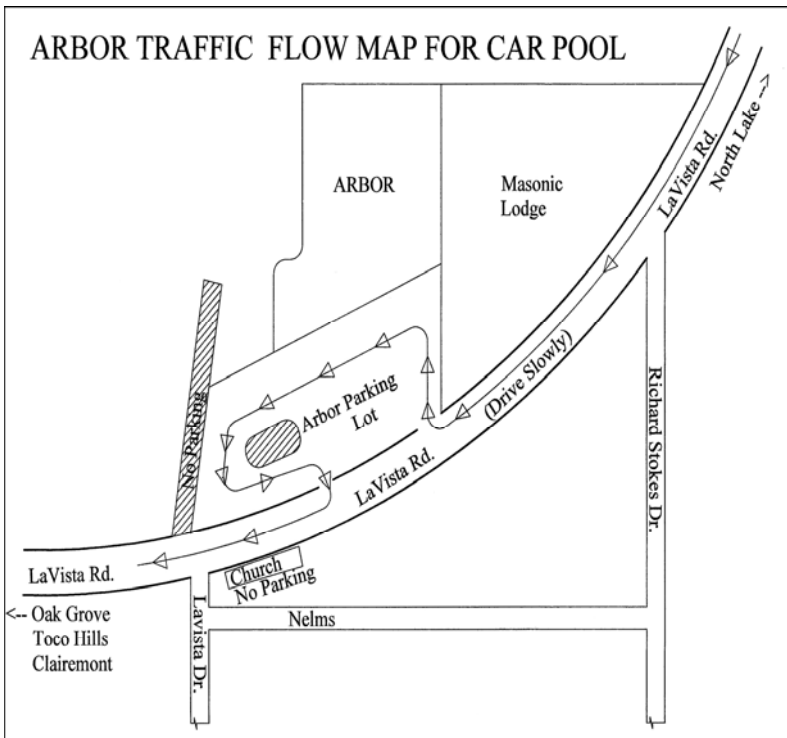
Getting to and From School

Arrival and Dismissal

Students should be dropped off in time to be ready for work at the beginning of class. Drop-off can be as early as 15 minutes before class time. All primary and elementary children are in their classrooms at 8:30, when classes begin. Middle School students are in their classroom by 8:15. In the

afternoon, elementary children not enrolled in the after-school Enrichment program are picked up between 3:00 and 3:15 pm. Middle school students are picked up between 3:30 and 3:45 pm.

A written note is required before teachers will release a child to anyone not listed on the pick-up form. Send this in with the child that morning. When this person arrives to pick up your child, he or she will be required to show a photo ID.



Carpool Procedures

The blind curve and 45 mph speed limit on LaVista Road create potential safety hazards for our children. Years of experience have helped us develop the following procedures to help ensure the safety of the children and keep the traffic moving smoothly and as quickly as possible. Also, please remember to be patient, turn right out of our parking lot, and observe the 25 mph speed limits in surrounding neighborhoods.

Our main concern is the safety of our children. Please show your support by following these procedures and the directions of the teachers and staff working at the car pool lines.

Car Seat Safety

Use proper car seats and seat belts in transporting children to and from school. Guidelines can be found in the American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Automobile Association, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Association web sites.

Driving and Cell Phones

Driving and cell phones are a hazardous mix. Please hang up your cell phone while driving on school grounds. Give your child your full attention during arrival and dismissal. Cell phones may only be used if your car is parked.

Be sure all children are buckled in their safety belts until the car comes to a complete stop.

Do not engage staff members in discussion at this time.

Never leave an unattended vehicle in carpool line.

Never drop off your child before 8:15am unless you intend for him to go to early morning care. There will be no one to supervise your child if he is waiting at our doors before 8:15am.

Morning Drop-Off

First car—drive past the building, stopping at the far end of the green painted curbside.

Subsequent cars—form single line along front of school and back to mailbox.

End of line—close spaces between cars. Do not block traffic on LaVista. Circle the block if necessary. Do not leave an opening for Masonic Lodge entrance. Cars parking in this lot must enter and exit as part of the carpool line.

Drop off your child at the sidewalk in front of the “arbor.” Do not drop off children any where along the red curb.

For safety reasons, the front door is not used at carpool time. Primary and elementary children enter the school from the lower side door.

Drive around the parking lot loop and out the exit, ***turning only right onto LaVista Road***, the safest way to exit on this dangerous curve.

Between 8:15-8:30am. Arbor’s parking lot is for carpool traffic only from 8:15-8:30am. During drop-off, please stay

in your vehicle. Staff members will be on hand to open car doors and help children to their classrooms. Please use the Masonic Lodge parking lot if you plan to leave/return to your vehicle. This means there should be no pedestrian traffic in the Arbor lot during carpool time (8:15-8:30am). We need all parents to heed these requests for the safety of all concerned.

The main doors open at 8:15 am. At that time teachers will be at the arbor to open car doors and walk youngest students to their classrooms.

If you arrive before 8:15am: Do not leave children unattended or send them to their classroom. They won't be able to get into the building and we will not know that they are there. We cannot be responsible for their safety before the main doors open at 8:15. Early Morning Care is provided for any children arriving before 8:15.

If you arrive after 8:30am: Parents of primary children must park and walk the child to the classroom. A very young child may "know the way," but could have trouble getting there.

For the All Day Primary Class

The All Day primary class opens its doors at 7:30. If you arrive between 7:30 and 8:15, please walk with your child and enter the classroom through the side door. If you arrive after 8:15 please use the carpool line.

Pick Up: Please do not enter the classroom. An assistant will let your child know you have arrived and help your child get ready to leave. This small courtesy will allow the remaining children to continue their day with minimal

interruptions. Please be sure to sign your child out each day.

LaVista Afternoon Dismissal: *Note:* We have three different afternoon dismissals. It is important to keep the carpool line clear at all times, even if you see no cars queuing up at the moment you pull up. If you leave your car there, you may unintentionally block an up-coming carpool lane!

Primary dismissal:

11:30am pick up and 2:30pm pick up

Park either in our parking lot or in the Masonic Lodge lot, facing the street. Do not park in carpool lane.

Walk to the playground to pick up your child. In inclement weather, children will be waiting in the downstairs hallway. Please make certain a teacher knows you are leaving with your child.

Dismissal for the All-day class is between 3:30 and 6:00pm. Dismissal is from the playground or in inclement weather from the door to the hallway.

Note: If you are also picking up an elementary child, you may pick up your primary child and wait on the playground or return to your parked car to wait.

2:30pm Dismissal

LaVista 1

2:30pm pick up is from the Arbor. Parents may line up along the car pool lane or park and meet the teachers in the Arbor.

Elementary dismissal:

We operate the morning and afternoon carpools in a “FERRY BOAT” pick-up system.

We have one entrance and one exit and they have a sign marking them.

Drive past the building into the parking lot. Staff will direct you in forming a double lane.

Turn off your engine. We will not load cars until all engines are off.

When Lanes 1 and 2 fill and all engines are off, a staff member announces “Safe to Load” and the carpool line is closed off at both ends.

Children get in cars and fasten seatbelts. Wait for the “Loading Completed” signal.

At the “Loading Completed” signal, start your engine.

Lane 1 proceeds first around the loop (first in, first out) and *turns to the right onto LaVista Road*, the only safe way to enter traffic on this dangerous curve.

The next group of cars will then be positioned in the two “ferry boat” lanes and the process will be repeated dismissal is over.

Middle School Dismissal

First car in carpool line: drive past the building and stop in front of the arbor.

Subsequent cars form single line along front of school.

Dismissal for Children in Different Levels

Parents with children in both primary and elementary classes and/or middle school may choose to enroll children 5 years and older in Enrichment for the period between these dismissal times. Parents who pick up a child at 2:30 and then wait on Arbor grounds for another child's later dismissal are asked to observe the following rules:

Children must be under a parent's supervision at all times.

Do not leave children unattended in a parked car. They have been known to try to follow you.

If you have business in the office, we know it will only "take a minute," but please leave the carpool line free by parking in the lot.

Changes in Pick-up Routine

If your child is to be picked up by anyone other than the people listed on the Emergency Release Form or if your child is going home with a friend, you must notify your child's teacher in writing. If there is a last minute change of plans, the school will accept phone or email instruction. All requests are subject to verification and anyone picking up a child may be required to display personal identification. These measures are in place for the safety of your child and for your peace of mind.

Emory Campus Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival time is between 8:45 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. To prevent disruption to the class, all children should be in class by 9:00 a.m. Please walk your child all the way inside the foyer. Do not drop her off in the parking lot, top of the stairs, or sidewalk.

If you arrive after 9:00 a.m., be aware that class has started and say "goodbye" in the foyer. There is a bulletin board in the foyer with important messages and parent/teacher communications. Please take the time to read these and greet the staff and other parents in the morning.

At noon the younger children are dismissed from the playground's side gate. On rainy days, please park and come to the classroom to get your child. All parents and caretakers initial the sign-out list each day when they pick up. Please encourage your child to say "goodbye" to the teacher at sign-out time. A late fee is charged if you arrive after 12:15 p.m. for morning pick up and after 3:15 p.m. for afternoon pick up.

Parking at Emory

Please park only in the spaces reserved for Arbor Montessori School. To avoid towing, clearly display your Arbor Montessori sticker on your car.

Communication

Open communication is an important aspect of life at Arbor, and we believe in maintaining an atmosphere of support and understanding. We encourage parents to talk with teachers

whenever they have a question or need clarification on classroom happenings. Teachers and staff members can be reached via telephone and e-mail unless indicated otherwise. Teachers will call parents as soon as they feel an issue needs discussion. We encourage parents to stop by the office to see an administrator, to make an appointment to see an administrator, or to ask the administrative assistants for help.

Telephone Calls

We do our best to answer incoming calls. Sometimes all phone lines are busy, and the phone system will send you to voice mail. You may reach a teacher's or staff member's voice mail after hours by following the recorded instructions. There is a telephone in each classroom for urgent messages and emergencies. However, during school hours we are likely to route most calls to voice mail to avoid interfering with lessons. Voice mail extensions are listed in the school directory, which is published annually.

The Arbor Update

The Arbor Update, a weekly newsletter describing upcoming events, announcements, and notices is emailed to families weekly.

Our policy is to include only information that pertains to or is sponsored by the school. Announcements originating from parents or committees must first be routed through and receive approval from the director of communications. If you are affiliated with a school activity such as a sports team, the Running Club, or a Board committee, and wish to put an item in *The Arbor Update*, the director of communications

must receive it for approval no later than 12noon on Wednesdays. The *Arbor Update* is emailed to the Arbor community on Mondays, or, if there is no school on Monday, the day that school resumes.

Class-specific information that requires your attention and processing are included in the courier pack, a large white Tyvek® envelope that is sent home with children. Teachers also have email groups to send specific information to their classroom's parents. We have significantly reduced paper usage by sending information electronically, aligning our school with its mission to care for the earth.

Communication Guidelines

In order to communicate with sensitivity to our community and to the staff and volunteers who wish to serve it, we have come up with guidelines for communication using *The Arbor Update*. These guidelines are designed to help reduce repetition and confusion. These guidelines have been reviewed by an ad hoc communications committee and approved by the head of school. These guidelines are a first attempt to improve communications at Arbor. We are looking at additional ways to streamline messages and will keep the community updated on those developments as they are implemented.

1. Each *Update* item is limited to 100 words.
2. *Update* items will no longer include links to flyers. All communication will be in the Update itself.
3. We will include links to pages on our website, or that

of another organization.

4. Each *Update* item that is time-sensitive (taking into account certain deadlines, etc.) will run for approximately two weeks prior to the date of the event (or deadline).
5. The deadline for *Update* submissions is the end of the workday (3pm) every Wednesday.
6. Items will be placed according to the most imminent event/most recent news
7. Items that appear “below the scroll” are the less imminent/recent items.
8. Any mid-week all-school emails will be due to administrative necessity (emergencies, school closings, etc.) and are decided at the administrative level.
9. We will not "double-up" or duplicate messages already in the *Update* by sending individual all-school emails during the week of an event or at any other time, excluding cancellation notifications, even if the wording is changed slightly.
10. Parent Involvement Co-chairs (PICS) can include in their duties the support of these guidelines and encourage their class parents to read the *Update*.
11. PICs are not required to send all-school messages using their class’s email groups.

The Montessori Observer

The Montessori Observer is a publication with articles about Montessori concepts, school events and programs. It is a way to broadcast what is unique about Arbor to the wider community. The *Observer* is emailed approximately once a month to the Arbor community. A hard copy of our Graduate Issue is published in the spring and this issue is sent home to our parents with their children. It is also mailed to grandparents, alumni, and friends. *The Observer's* contributors include staff and parent volunteers. The editor-in-chief is the director of communications.

The Hall Table

In the central campus hall by the office, there is a table with a binder containing names of middle school students who provide babysitting services. Flyers and other information can be found there as well. NOTE: Please check with director of communications before placing items on this table.

Community Bulletin Board

Above the Hall Table, there is a bulletin board that announces various events at Arbor or within the Arbor community, such as concerts, plays, or child-care opportunities. NOTE: Please check with director of communications before placing items on this bulletin board.

Website

The Arbor website is designed for prospective families to learn about our school as well as for keeping our current parents well-informed. You can find announcements,

archives of *The Arbor Update* and other publications, an events calendar, and more. Please visit our website at: www.arbormontessori.org.

Communication of School Closings

We follow Dekalb County's schedule for closings due to inclement weather. We make every effort to post these and any other closings on Arbor's website or voice mail; however, please understand that if there are power losses or unsafe road conditions, we may not be able to access Arbor's computer or phone system and therefore may not be able to render this service. Therefore, if Dekalb County is closed due to inclement weather, and you have not received any other communication, then assume that Arbor is closed as well.

Directory

We ask that you respect the privacy of the parents listed in the directory and use these numbers only for school-related purposes, children's social events, and carpool arrangements. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of students and their parents may not be released for commercial purposes and must remain confidential to the school.

Drop Box

There is a drop box at central campus located just to the left of the front doors. This is a convenient place for you to drop off information and tuition checks after hours. Items placed in the drop box are safe; the box is checked regularly.

Tuition Information

New parents pay their first of ten scheduled payments upon acceptance into the school community. All other parents make their first payment towards the next school year in February upon returning the student contracts. The annual tuition is payable in 10 equal installments. The first payment is due upon acceptance and the second on June 1. Tuition is due thereafter on the first of every month. All payments received after the 10th of the month are subject to a late fee. Monthly tuition payments are one tenth of the annual tuition rate for your child's class. Please contact our bookkeeper in the main office with any questions or concerns.

Tuition rates are set by the Board of Trustees in December and are announced in January. If you are having difficulties in this area, please contact the business manager, who will be most happy to help you work out a satisfactory solution. If parents are two months behind on their payment schedule and have not contacted the business manager to make special arrangements, their child will not be permitted to attend class.

Classroom Life

Observations

You are encouraged to observe in your child's classroom at least once a year. Observing provides an opportunity to better understand your child's daily experiences in the Montessori environment. Beginning in mid-October and continuing through early May, LaVista parents may call or visit the office

to arrange a time to observe. Emory parents can sign up in their child's classroom. Parents are requested to make every effort to observe on the days they sign up as slots are limited—please call us in advance if you are not able to visit. Teachers receive weekly observation schedules and will be expecting you at the time you have signed up for. Please see “Observation Tips” at the back of this handbook for more information.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Sign-up for conferences at the main campus is handled through the office. At our Emory location, sign-up sheets are posted outside the classrooms. Before each conference time, we will send a “Getting Ready for Conferences” form for parents to fill out. Please take this opportunity to express questions, concerns, or ideas you would like to cover during the conference; this is very helpful to the teacher and provides a spring-board for effective discussions. At conference time you will receive a written report detailing your child’s progress. Middle school conferences may be conducted on a different schedule and will involve the student’s participation.

Classroom Visits

You are invited to visit your child’s class to share special interests and skills. Talking with the children about a hobby of yours, teaching them a skill, or introducing them to your kind of work are important and welcome ways to enrich their experiences. Our classrooms also are visited by educators from the community, both Montessori and otherwise, and by

college students working on special projects.

Nutrition

Snacks—Primary

Each family will have the opportunity to serve as the Family of the Week. The designated family will be asked to do the class grocery shopping, laundry, and bring flowers for the children to arrange. A schedule will be provided at the beginning of the year for each class. Please feel free to swap weeks with other family if that is convenient. Classrooms provide fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grain snacks during the morning.

Lunches

Children are more likely to eat and enjoy their lunch if they participate in planning it, shopping for it, and preparing it. We ask that children be given choices within a selection of healthy foods and avoid beverages containing excessive sugar, corn syrup, sucrose or dextrose. Although opinions vary greatly about nutrition, it is widely accepted that saturated fats and sugared foods are less healthy than whole grains, fruits, vegetables and protein-rich foods. Guidelines are different at each level; please check with your child's teacher about items that are appropriate choices for school lunches. Microwaves are not available in all classrooms; please check with your child's teacher regarding the use of a microwave by the children.

Birthday Celebrations

Primary—Birthdays are marked with a ceremony that emphasizes a child’s personal history. The birthday child carries a model of the earth around a lighted candle that represents the sun, making one revolution for each year of his life. As the child walks, the teachers share information given by parents about something significant that occurred in each year. Parents are invited to attend the celebration. Instead of sending food, parents can give an item from the class “wish list.”

If you plan to have a birthday party for your child outside of school, please use the postal system to mail the invitations. Do not send them to school for distribution.

You are welcome to check with your child’s teacher for specific guidelines on how best to celebrate your child’s special day in the classroom.

Elementary—Please check with your child’s teacher for guidelines on how best to celebrate your child’s special day in the classroom.

Clothing

Primary – “Help me to do it myself”

All children should bring a complete set of labeled clothes (shirt, pants, socks and underwear) to be left at school on the Drop-in Day. Even if your child has outgrown “bathroom accidents,” she may get wet from the water activities in the classroom or muddy from the playground and want a change

of clothes. Please be sure to put your child's full name on each article of clothing.

Children need comfortable, casual clothing that they can put on and take off by themselves. At home, we strongly encourage you to designate appropriate clothing and allow your child to choose his own outfit for school each day. When choosing appropriate clothing please consider the following guidelines:

Clothing that your child can independently put on, such as tee-shirts, elastic waistband pants, sweatshirts, etc.

Colorful clothing that your child enjoys wearing, or has personally picked out

Avoid cherished items that need to be protected from normal spills, art materials, playground activity, etc.

Avoid belts, suspenders, difficult snaps, and ties on the backs of dresses that may cause frustration for children and often lead to unnecessary toileting accidents.

Avoid clothing and shoes with super heroes, cartoons, or movie characters. In a classroom setting, they can be very distracting and make it difficult for your child to engage in the activities of the class.

Jewelry and other Accessories

We discourage children from wearing jewelry and watches to school because they are easily broken and potentially dangerous if caught on something in the classroom or outdoors. Other items such as purses, belts, sunglasses, and

hats can be a distraction and are best avoided. We encourage you to review these guidelines with your child and appreciate your support.

Shoes

Shoes should enable your child to move with confidence and coordination. Tennis shoes, well-fitting sandals (not flip-flops) or leather shoes are best. Avoid jellies, open-toed sandals, clogs, cowboy boots, and Crocs because they can be dangerous in the classroom and on the playground. Also, please do not send your child in flashing or light up shoes as they are highly distracting for the wearer and other children.

Possessions: Primary Classes

Some children like to bring something from their secure home environment to school, a part of themselves to place in the new environment. We want to honor this urge and, at the same time, be sure that what the child brings leads to a positive experience. Please check with your child's teacher for guidelines.

Things to Bring to School

Flowers, things found in nature, and small plants are welcome as are things of interest to the class (eg. cultural or scientific artifacts). If you have any doubt, please contact your child's teacher.

Things to Leave at Home

Please do not send any live animals unless you have arranged it with your child's teacher. Please leave all *toys, music, card*

collections, money, food, (except lunch), candy, and gum at home or in the car.

Lost and Found

A basket for items lost or misplaced by students is located at the bottom of the stairs in the LaVista hall. These items are donated to charity every 30-60 days. Notification of the donation dates will be posted in *The Arbor Update* and on a sign above the basket.

Tasks Children Can Do to Learn Responsibility

18 months-3 years old

Turn off lights while being carried.

Carry in the newspaper or mail.

Get her/his own cereal or snack from kid-friendly containers.

Pick up toys and clothes.

Wash tables/counters with a damp sponge.

Put a soiled/wet diaper in the diaper pail.

Wash vegetables, tear lettuce, stir.

Help set the table.

Feed and water pets.

Help clean up after meals and play.

Wake up siblings.

Run simple errands around the house.

4-6 years old

All of the above, plus:

Help find grocery items in the store.

Help fold towels and wash.

Pour things.

Give you a back rub or foot rub.

Help measure ingredients.

Count goods at the grocery store.

Sort white and dark clothes for laundry. Water plants.

Help vacuum, sweep, and dust.

Take library books/videos to/from the car.

Help younger siblings.

Help plant a garden.

Wash the floor.

Help put groceries away. Carry in light groceries.

Put her/his own clothes away. Take clothes out of the dryer.

Help make beds.

Put plastic dishes in the dishwasher. Make salads.

Bring recyclables to the garage.

Lead family prayer.

Scramble eggs, make toast.

Tell you when the traffic light turns green. Clear dishes from table.

Seal and stamp envelopes.

Put dishes in the dishwasher.

Measure soap for the dishwasher and start the cycle.

Be responsible for compost buckets.

Haul things in a wagon. Assist in meal planning. Make a simple meal.

Empty dishwasher, stack dishes on counter. Rake leaves for short periods of time.

Help wash pets.

Prepare her/his own lunch. Walk well-behaved pets. Carry in

firewood.

Start to manage her/his own money.

6-9 year olds

All of the above, plus:

Make a simple breakfast.

Make the bed.

Set the table.

Clean their room.

Clear the table and wipe it off.

Take phone messages and write them

Down.

Help wash and dry dishes.

Fold laundry.

Put away groceries.

Arrange clothing in drawers.

Help prepare food.

Dust.

Prepare a sandwich or other food

Take care of pets.

Take out the trash, compost.

Water plants.

Recycling.

Clean out the inside of the car.

Help read recipes.

Help measure ingredients

9-12 year olds

All of the above, plus:

Read a recipe and help prepare it.

Sort clothes and learn to use the washing machine.

Plan menus for the week.

Vacuum.

Write out the shopping list.

Rake leaves, pull weeds.

Shop for groceries with a parent.

Wash the car.

Take a calculator to the store and
compare items.

Put younger siblings to bed.

12-15 years old

All of the above, plus:

Baby sit.

Make appointments.

Cook meals.

Order out for the family.

Buy groceries from a list.

Mow the lawn.

Wash windows .

Assist parents with home projects.

Change light bulbs.

Help in a parent's business.

Playground Guidelines

In general, the guidelines of the Montessori classroom extend to the playground, namely, respect for ourselves, each other, and the environment. Please remember these guidelines and actively supervise your children while using Arbor's playgrounds. Note: the LaVista primary playground is reserved for the LaVista II class from 11:30 to 12:15 and from 4:30 until 6:00pm.

Student Support

We believe that it is not only desirable but also possible for every child to be a successful and happy learner. In our experience, children can achieve success in learning only when provided with the proper learning environment and the necessary support.

Please let your child's teacher know of any significant changes to your child's life such as remarriage, divorce, family hospitalization, traveling, moving, death in the family, or the anticipated birth or adoption of another sibling. These events may cause a child to act differently in class and teachers will be better able to respond to a child's behavioral changes if this information is provided. This information will remain confidential.

Policy for Supporting Children in the Classroom

For a number of years, our AMI Team (all lead teachers, coordinators, the director of auxiliary Programs, the business manager and the head of school) has focused on how we can better serve the individual needs of children at Arbor. We

believe that it is not only desirable but also possible for every child to be a successful and happy learner. In our experience, children can achieve success in learning only when provided with the proper learning environment and the necessary support.

It is our hope that every child who attends Arbor will be able to remain here through middle school. At the same time, we want to ensure that every child has a successful school experience. Gaining necessary skills and building positive self esteem are vital to this successful experience. These two goals urge us to take a proactive stance in responding to a child who is having difficulty with his or her intellectual, social, or emotional development. We explain to parents what we observe in the classroom and join them in exploring intervention possibilities. We do not diagnose or label attention problems or other learning differences, and we respect each parent's beliefs about how to support his or her child.

Early Intervention

Current research clearly reinforces our view that early intervention is critical. For example, the National Institute of Health's 20-year research on reading suggests that 60% of children will face challenges in learning this skill. If proper support has not been given, by the time a child reaches 4th grade, the possibility of catching up is very low. The report recommends that problems in reading must be identified and addressed early to ensure the success of children in all content areas where reading is crucial. Because reading is such a critical skill in our culture, the high number of children

who are not currently reading at an adequate level has actually resulted in a public health issue.

In our years of working with children and families, we have seen the positive results of alert observation and immediate intervention. Sometimes adults take a “wait and see” approach, thinking that the difficulties are simply developmental and will not become real problems. Experience has taught us at Arbor that it is better not to wait. Children who receive the support they need become successful learners, regardless of what issues they are struggling with. Children who are supported in this way also maintain a sense of confidence in themselves and are positive about learning.

Sometimes discerning the kind of support needed is difficult. Parents and teachers must work in partnership and try many different approaches; some may work out and some may not. However, in our experience, every time parents were willing to persevere in finding the best support, their child found success, either at Arbor or in another learning environment. On the other hand, children who are left to struggle without intervention and support feel very discouraged about school and themselves. When that happens, emotional problems add to the learning difficulties. When we speak with parents of children whose needs took them elsewhere, we hear that these children are doing quite well with more structure or more individual attention than is possible in a Montessori classroom.

Additional Help—Tutoring, Evaluations, etc.

Sometimes parents are uncomfortable when we recommend that they seek additional help for their child. We are sensitive to their concerns while simultaneously advocating for the child. It is a delicate balance in which we all continue to work. Our policy is only a framework. Each child is a unique individual and his or her needs are addressed individually; at the same time, we continue to search for ways to meet those needs and to refine our communication with parents.

Independence, Work Cycles, and Class Size

In our classrooms we are committed to supporting each child to develop his or her fullest potential. One way we do this is to help children develop focus and concentration by respecting their work and work cycle. The Montessori environment fosters independence and self-esteem by providing opportunities to practice the life skills inherent in managing social interactions and participating in conflict resolution techniques. We meet the standard established by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), which include guidelines for class size. One of the benefits of a large class is that it maximizes the students' opportunities to depend on themselves and each other.

Support Systems

Arbor has added a language arts specialist to provide transitional reading support for first year lower elementary students and for primary students who are moving up to lower elementary. We have generated a list of specific strategies that teachers can use in a Montessori environment

to help children increase concentration, practice social skills and focus their energy. The teachers, the coordinators, and the head of school observe the classrooms and the individual children in order to be able to offer support when needed.

The Montessori primary program is a three or four year program. For a child to receive the full benefit of the Montessori primary program and to be prepared for Montessori elementary, a minimum of three years primary experience is recommended. Many children benefit from a fourth year in primary; the teachers, coordinators, parents and the head of school work together to determine whether an extra year is developmentally appropriate for the child.

Our parent education and support programs carry out our intention to partner with parents in serving the child. The head of school and the coordinators work to provide support for parents by being available to answer questions and by offering a variety of parent programs.

Children at Arbor are learning successfully; they feel good about themselves and believe in their ability to learn. Children who are having difficulty are getting ample support. However, it is not possible for the Montessori classroom to meet the needs of all learners. We have spent time talking with parents of children whose needs took them elsewhere. These children have transferred to other learning environments and are doing well with more structure or more individual instruction than is possible in a Montessori classroom. As we learn more about how children learn and continue to work and talk with families, we can help every child become a happy and successful learner. With the child

at the center, we will continue to build a strong community of support.

Position on Infants in the Classroom

Because the appropriateness of an infant in the classroom must be determined on a case-by-case basis, this cannot be a set policy. Arbor's position is that we support this important time for mother and child whenever possible. The student and the classroom are our first considerations. Therefore, these important individual criteria must be met:

Having an infant in the classroom must not interfere with the normalization of the class, and the learning in the class must not be compromised.

The head of school, the business manager, the coordinators, and members of the AMI Team (including the teacher whose class will be affected) will determine if it is appropriate for the infant to be in the classroom.

Determination of the appropriateness for the infant to be in the classroom is based on the temperament of the infant and the dynamics of the classroom.

There will be a two-week trial period, followed by a cycle of inquiry. This will include observations by the coordinator, the head of school, and, if necessary, other AMI teachers. It will also include regular meetings of the coordinator with the teacher/mother, whom we believe will be the first to recognize whether or not her classroom is compromised.

Childcare arrangements must be in place before the initial trial period begins in case it is determined that the infant

should not be in the classroom.

The infant can remain in the classroom until he or she begins to roll, crawl, or move about. Once the child becomes mobile (as described above), the teacher/mother will utilize other child care arrangements.

Discussion of Position

Montessori is not just a method education; it is a way of life. According to Maria Montessori, the most important stage of life is birth to three years. During this time, human beings are creating the basic structure that forms the essence of who they are. Physically, psychically, and emotionally, infancy and early childhood are critical times for human beings. During the first eight weeks, the child looks to his mother or primary caretaker as a prototype for future relationships. These eight weeks are part of the “external pregnancy,” a period lasting approximately nine months. At the end of a successful external pregnancy, the child learns to trust himself and his environment.

Because of this, we are committed to supporting members of our staff during this important time for both mother and child.

Having an infant in the classroom has been successful at Arbor. Other Montessori schools have also experienced success and have found it valuable for their students. In each case, after some initial fascination by the children, the babies became an accepted presence in the room and the children’s daily work continued. In a day and age when respect, kindness, and cooperative relationships are taking a back seat

to other priorities, we feel that our children benefit from witnessing the natural loving care that happens between a parent and an infant. When children witness this on a daily basis, it strengthens and supports their desire to form close and caring relationships with others.

Arbor Montessori faces an inevitable personnel cycle as many of its veteran teachers retire. There is a shortage of AMI teachers. Schools all over the country, including Arbor, are sponsoring AMI trainees in the hopes of recruiting and retaining dedicated and qualified teachers. Most of these teachers will be young and starting families. We may address this issue many times in our school's future.

We encourage parents to approach the classroom teacher and the administrators with any questions they may have about this issue. It is important that our parents understand our position and feel comfortable with it. We feel this statement about our position allows parents to see the careful and prudent consideration we are giving this issue. This position is based on our Mission Statement and the Montessori philosophy upon which all pedagogical decisions are based at Arbor Montessori School. We will listen and respond to parents' questions and concerns, but the decision is ultimately handled by the AMI Team and the Administration Team.

Policy for Grounds for Dismissal from Arbor Montessori School

The following constitute grounds for a child's dismissal from our program:

Inability to function in the Montessori classroom. Occasionally, a child needs more help than we are equipped to give. Parents will be informed if the teacher feels a problem exists.

Habitual absences and/or tardiness (either arriving late or leaving early).

Continued failure by the parent to attend parent/teacher conferences.

Lack of parental involvement and assistance in support of the classroom and the school.

A parent or guardian convicted of a crime or moral turpitude.

Overdue tuition. Since we operate solely on tuitions, we need your cooperation in making payments on time. If you are having difficulties in this area, please contact the business manager, who will be most happy to help you work out a satisfactory solution. If parents are two months behind on their payment schedule and have not made special arrangements with the office, their child will not be permitted to attend class.

Parent behaviors that are neither respectful of nor conducive to community, including irresolvable differences regarding school policies. Arbor Montessori School believes that a

positive and constructive working relationship between the school and a student's parents or guardian is essential to the fulfillment of our mission. Thus, Arbor Montessori School reserves the right not to continue enrollment or not to re-enroll a student if Arbor reasonably concludes that the actions of a parent or guardian make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible or otherwise seriously interfere with the school's accomplishment of its educational purposes.

Arbor's Support and Resolution Procedures

Parent Concern about child/teacher

1. Meet with teacher (with or without coordinator)
- ↓
2. Meet with teacher and coordinator
- ↓
3. Meet with teacher, coordinator, and head of school
- ↓
4. Meeting of coordinators and head of school
- ↓
5. Head of school makes final decision

Teacher Concern about child/parent

1. Meet with parents (with or without coordinator)
- ↓
2. Meet with parents and coordinator
- ↓
3. Meet with head of school, parents, coordinator, or other
- ↓
4. Meeting of coordinators and head of school
- ↓
5. Head of school makes final decision

Confidentiality Policy

Information pertaining to children enrolled in the school is considered confidential and may not be released by school staff without first obtaining written permission signed by the parents. Relevant information may be shared among the appropriate school faculty and staff. In emergency situations, information about a child's medical status, allergies, family situations, authorized adults to pick a child, medical release forms, and any relevant information may be shared by school staff as needed with persons authorized by the Department of Human Resources or with other appropriate persons.

Policy of Rules of Usage at Arbor Facilities

Arbor groups wishing to use Arbor's indoor facilities after hours and/or on weekends for non-curricular activities must:

Confirm in writing that they consist predominantly of members of Arbor families; conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Arbor's Mission Statement and non-discrimination clause; and follow all the procedures and policies established by the Arbor administrative staff.

Check with the auxiliary programs director to see if appropriate space is available

Clear the date and time with the auxiliary programs director

Find a staff member to open and close the building and let the auxiliary programs director know who this person is.

Have an appropriate staff person present if the meeting is about Arbor's business, policies, procedures, or Arbor's Montessori educational programs

Leave the space in the same condition as found

Secure prior approval from the auxiliary programs director to use any materials or supplies of the school

Take out any trash generated

Note: The Administration reserves the right to update or change these rules from time to time as needed.

Rules of Usage for Outdoor Facilities

Note: No student may be on any of our playgrounds unsupervised. Once a child has been released to a parent, Arbor staff is no longer responsible for that child.

Primary Playground Usage Guidelines

The LaVista primary playground is reserved for the All Day class from 11:30am until 12:30pm or until the primary students have returned to their classroom. The LaVista primary playground is also reserved from 4:00-6:00pm. The Department of Human Resources (DHR) sets strict guidelines for outdoor time for the All Day class that includes the conditions for play and student/teacher ratios.

Children may not play near the gate at the back that opens onto the parking lot or near the wooden fence adjacent to our neighbor's yard. The sidewalk gates must be closed at all times.

Health and Safety

Forms

We must have on file a signed statement giving consent for medical treatment for each enrolled child. If we should have to contact you in case of an emergency, we will rely on The Family Data form on the Student Contract for the most current, accurate information. Each classroom teacher has copies of the Family Data form with signature; class medical files are taken on camping trips, field trips, and fire drills. ***If your daytime number changes during the school year, please advise us immediately.*** You may call or email

changes to the front office at any time.

The Department of Human Resources monitors our after-school and All-Day Primary programs. DHR requires us to have on file the complete work address of each parent in these programs. Since we accept drop-ins in Enrichment and give care in emergency situations, we must have this information for every child at Arbor. Therefore we ask every family to complete a Parent Employment Form at the beginning of the year.

Dispensing of Medications

Arbor's Health and Safety Committee, in compliance with the Department of Human Resources, has established this policy to ensure that dispensing of medication is safe for your child. It applies to all students taking medication, either on a temporary or continuing basis. The parent must provide the following before any non-prescription or prescription medication is administered to a student:

A Medication Information form completely and accurately filled out and turned in to the Arbor Office.

Your child's medication in the original container from the pharmacist. (If requested, the pharmacist will give you two original containers.)

Your child's medication is handed directly to an Arbor staff member by an adult. Do not put medication in lunch boxes.

If your child is to receive medication for longer than two weeks, Arbor must have a letter from your child's doctor stating that your child will be continuously medicated.

Contagious Diseases

Notices of communicable diseases and highly contagious maladies such as chicken pox or lice are sent home with every affected child as soon as we are aware of the situation. Each year we have one or two instances of lice. Arbor's policy requires the child to remain home until completely nit free. If your child develops a fever, you must keep him or her home for at least 24 hours after the fever subsides without medication. If antibiotics are required, the child must stay home for at least 24 hours after beginning treatment. A child with any of these symptoms may infect other children. If all parents keep sick children at home, everybody's children will stay healthier.

Because of the possible need for extra preventive actions, or care for other members of the Arbor community who may have been exposed, we ask that parents let the office know as soon as possible if the child has a communicable disease. This information will be shared only with the child's teacher, and possibly a member of the Health and Safety Committee. If notice of the illness needs to be communicated to other members of the Arbor community (e.g., other parents), notification will be sent in generic terms (e.g., "A child at Arbor has a diagnosis of...") in order to protect the child's privacy.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Because infections spread easily from one child to another, please keep your child home if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

Fever: Temperature of 100F degrees or higher, taken under the arm, and sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability or confusion. Temperature of 101.5F degrees, taken under the arm, with or without other symptoms

Diarrhea: Three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period

Vomiting: Two or more times within the past 24 hours

Rash: Body rash, especially with fever or itching

Sore throat: With fever and swollen glands

Eye discharge: Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pinkeye

Not Feeling Good: Unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, confused, or irritable

Head lice: It is Arbor Montessori School's policy that children be nit-free before returning to school.

Immunization Records

The State of Georgia requires schools to retain immunization certificates on every child (unless the parent(s) submits a notarized religious exemption letter or a medical exemption certificate to the school). Please schedule an appointment with the doctor well in advance of the first day of school. "Well babies" often have to wait months for the next available appointment.

New to Arbor Montessori School: Parents are required to submit a Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) to the school. Please make sure that the date of expiration in the upper right

area of the form is still valid or that the “Complete” box is checked by the doctor.

Four Years Old and Enrolled Last Year: Four-year-olds must have their immunizations evaluated to see if more vaccine doses are needed.

6th Grade: All students who will be entering the 6th grade are required to have proof of measles, mumps and varicella/chickenpox immunity.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents are responsible for submitting the most current certificate(s) on their child(ren), which may be turned in to the school by person, mail, fax (404-636-2700) or email. A random number of immunization certificates will be audited by the Board of Health during each school year. If an audit uncovers that certain vaccines are not up to date, your child may be prevented from returning to school until the required dose(s) has been given and an updated immunization certificate has been received by the school.

Insurance and Liability

Arbor carries supplemental student accident insurance on all students. When children are on their way to and from school, at school, or on a field trip arranged by the school, this type of policy covers the medical expenses for any accident to the extent that a family’s personal medical policy does not pay. It is not a liability policy.

Under Georgia law the owner of a vehicle is liable for anything that happens to anyone riding in that vehicle. In the event of a serious injury or death in an automobile on a field

trip, the automobile owner is personally liable. Anyone who volunteers to provide transportation for a field trip should take note of this personal liability.

Emergency Evacuations

All staff and children are trained in safety procedures to be implemented in emergency situations. Tornado drills and fire drills are scheduled to ensure familiarity of procedures. Information and evacuation routes are posted within each classroom. If we have an emergency school closing mid-day, school personnel will contact you.

Observation Tips

Preparing Your Child for Parent Observations

Observations are a wonderful way for parents to become familiar with their child's school and to get a feel for what she does during her time with us. It can be difficult for children, particularly young or new children, to have Mom or Dad come in and then leave without them. We can assist the child in this transition with some careful preparation.

A few days before your scheduled observation share your plans with your child. Let him know that you will be coming to watch him work and that he may do whatever he normally does when you are not there.

Explain that you will arrive at a given time and will stay for a while to watch her work. Convey that you do not want to interrupt or disturb the class, so you will need to sit very quietly and watch while she continues to work.

Clearly explain that after an hour or so you will quietly leave the classroom and that you will be sure to say a quick and quiet good-bye. Mention the pick-up plans. For example, "I will see you at the end of your school day and we will go home and have a snack together."

It is important that your child knows what to expect and is not surprised when you leave at the end of your observation.

Please be assured that children respond in very different ways to having a parent in the classroom. Some continue their work and barely glance up. Others want to show you all of the new things that they have learned and will bring their

work close by. Occasionally, a child will become “cling-y” and want to sit on your lap or cry when you leave. This is not unusual and the teachers will know how to handle such a situation. Please remember to turn off your cell phones and pagers! Bring a notebook to jot down questions and observations that you wish to share with the teacher at later time.

What to look for during your observation of a primary class:

An environment that is orderly and beautiful. Shelves, furnishings, artwork and materials are at the child’s level. Materials are grouped by subject around the room. This is a Children’s House.

Children working independently. Some work alone, some are in pairs or small groups, and others are having an individual lesson.

Children concentrating, on work or in conversation, even though there is much activity and work going on around them.

Children cooperating and helping one another.

Children settling their own differences.

Children caring for the environment--putting work away when completed, cleaning up their messes, and handling the materials with care.

Teachers interacting with children but not as the central focus of the classroom.

What to look for during your observation of an elementary class:

An environment that is orderly and attractive with many inviting materials arranged in subject matter areas around the room.

Children working independently usually in small groups or twosomes while others are having a lesson.

Children working with materials but now you will see more writing as the child move towards abstraction of the concepts.

Children concentrating on work or in work-related conversation, even though there is much activity and work going on around them.

Children cooperating and helping one another.

Children are settling their own differences.

Children caring for the environment--putting work away when completed, cleaning up their messes, and handling the materials with care.

Teachers interacting with children but not as the central focus of the classroom.