

# JUNEAU MONTESSORI SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK



The Juneau Montessori School is a Private Nonprofit School Providing Programs for  
Children ages 15 months – 7 years

Established January 1985

Juneau Montessori School  
750 St. Ann's Avenue  
Douglas, Alaska 99824  
Phone: (907) 364-3535

Email: [jms@juneaumontessori.org](mailto:jms@juneaumontessori.org)  
[www.juneaumontessorischool.org](http://www.juneaumontessorischool.org)

Revised August 24, 2016

## **JUNEAU MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

### **OUR MISSION**

To spark a lifelong interest in learning by providing a safe, developmentally appropriate and culturally enriching environment that fosters all aspects of the child's personality; supporting the social-emotional and academic development of each child in our care through the implementation of the AMI Montessori Method within Juneau's unique natural setting.

### **OUR VISION**

To positively shape the future by cultivating the next generation of inquisitive, independent, socially responsible young citizens regardless of race, religion, or socio-economic level.

### **OUR VALUES**

At the Juneau Montessori School we value:

- The implementation of authentic Montessori programs
- Quality child-centered programs
- Safe, peaceful environments for children
- The development of independence, self-discipline, self-direction, and compassion as well as trust, and respect for self and others
- Appreciation of our staff and the work they do
- Competitive salaries for our staff as well as a supportive work environment including trust, respect and open communication
- Ongoing opportunities for staff development
- An effective professional board that is committed to the mission, vision and goals of the organization
- Active engagement of parents, staff, board and the greater Juneau Community
- Committed parents and opportunities for authentic participation
- Cultural, linguistic and economic diversity
- Financial sustainability for our program

### **OUR GOALS**

- To work together in partnership to develop, maintain, and nurture a strong and vital Montessori community of parents, staff and children.
- To support the school community by increasing opportunities for parent education, parent participation, and to increase communication among parents, staff and board.
- To develop and strengthen the school's relationship with the larger community of Juneau by creating opportunities to provide information about Montessori education through open houses and outreach. To organize and participate in community service projects as deemed appropriate and needed within the larger community.
- To assure the financial stability of the school by developing a specific funding plan that draws on a variety of resources, such as: fundraising (events), a direct donation campaign, planned giving, grants, business and corporate donations, and unrelated business.
- To keep tuition affordable within the constraints of the funding plan.
- To build a solid financial reserve to assure the school's long-term survival.

- To provide strong support to staff by providing ongoing education and staff development opportunities.
- To support staff creativity and ongoing work through strong parent participation as directed by the classroom guides.
- To develop and implement a scholarship program which will ensure/support our commitment to maintaining the socio-economic diversity of children in our program.
- To develop and maintain the quality of the physical environment, both indoor and outdoor, assuring that the environment continues to support the mission of the school.
- To continue to renew the environment, both indoor and outdoor, offering new opportunities for learning and life experiences.
- To develop and maintain a well-defined board to oversee and support the mission of the school, following AMI guidelines.
- To recruit an appropriate mix of parent representatives and community members to serve on the board of directors.

## **OUR OBJECTIVES**

JMS programs will assist the child in developing the following skills and characteristics:

- Healthy self-concept and inner security
- Self-discipline
- Increased ability to concentrate
- A love of learning without the need to compete
- A sense of order
- Greater curiosity
- Creativity and imagination
- Initiative and persistence
- The ability to discern, judge, and make choices
- Use of problem-solving skills
- Recognition of patterns
- Improved sensory-motor skills and logic
- Ability to observe the universe with all senses
- An appreciation of nature
- Courtesy and respect for others
- Sense of community and responsibility
- Decision making skills and independence

*“If we were to establish a primary principle, it would be to constantly allow the child’s participation in our lives; for he cannot learn to act if he does not join in our actions just as he cannot learn to speak if he does not hear. To extend the child this hospitality, to allow him to participate in our work can be difficult, but it costs nothing. Our time is a far more precious gift than material objects.”*

**MARIA MONTESSORI**

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Montessori philosophy and method of education is based on the work of Dr. Maria Montessori, who was the first Italian female physician and one of the greatest educators of the twentieth century. Dr. Montessori pioneered the work we do with children at the Juneau Montessori School, the same work that is done in thousands of schools on six continents. This philosophy and methodology is founded upon the child's developmental quest for independence and recognizes the unique potential in each child. Independence is achieved through a balance of freedom and limits within a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials, experiences and social interactions through which the child develops intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities.

Montessori education may be viewed as the ongoing response to human development at every stage of life. It respects the power of the child to absorb knowledge from everyone and everything around him/her. It is designed to take full advantage of the self-motivation and the unique ability of young children to develop their own capabilities.

Our teachers (called 'guides' in Montessori schools) are responsible for creating and maintaining a stimulating and purposeful environment. They are facilitators who provide help when needed, trusting in the child's potential for self-development.

Through decades of experience, observation, and experimentation, Dr. Montessori designed and implemented environments that support the needs of children at their various developmental stages. These prepared environments enable a group of children of varying ages, within the same developmental period, to function smoothly in a non-competitive atmosphere that helps each child develop at his/her own pace.

## **ACCREDITATION**

The Juneau Montessori School is dedicated to providing quality education and care to young children. JMS maintains accreditation with the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), and is affiliated with the North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA), the local chapter of the Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC-SEA), and Southeast Alaska Friends of Montessori (SEAFOM).

## **JUNEAU MONTESSORI SCHOOL (JMS) ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Juneau Montessori School is a private, non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Alaska.

The corporation's affairs are governed by a Board of Directors comprised of parents and members of the community at large. The Executive Director serves in an ex-officio capacity. The Board is elected by the membership (parents) who attends the Annual Meeting and Harvest Festival held in September every year.

The Board sets policy for the school and establishes goals. The Board prioritizes goals and objectives, and delegates responsibility to administrative staff and/or committees.

The Board manages the assets of the school, helps develop and approves the budget, and oversees fundraising. It operates Hidden Treasures; whose charitable contributions go directly to the school to help support it financially.

It is the Board's responsibility to oversee contracts and to fulfill the legal obligations of the corporation.

The Board establishes personnel policies and hires the Executive Director.

The Board establishes the corporation's By-Laws, which are approved by the membership.

The Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month but may change due to schedules. Per the Bylaws, the Board must meeting a minimum of 9 times annually. All parents and employees are welcome at Board meetings (except when the Board votes to go into executive session). Only Board members may vote.

### **JMS SCHOOL COMMITTEES**

Committees carry out much of the work of the Board of Directors and provide opportunities for staff and parents to become closely involved in the operation of the school. What gets accomplished depends on the interest and dedication of the parents and staff working together through the committees. Participation by parents in the committees is strongly encouraged. Your help is needed and expected.

The committees are: Finance, Board Nominating, Pedagogical, and Fund Development. Special committees may be created for issues that fall outside the scope of the existing committees. Committee members are volunteers, at least one of which shall be a board member. All parents may have input.

## **PEDAGOGICAL COMMITTEE (PC)**

The Pedagogical Committee provides support to all Montessori-trained and support staff for pedagogical issues and matters. Under the direction of the PC consultant and the Executive Director, the PC helps plan for and administer the toddler and primary programs in accordance with the philosophy and objectives of the Juneau Montessori School. The PC helps educate support staff, parents, and the public in understanding and implementing the Montessori philosophy. In addition, the PC will support lead guides in the development of corrective action plans to resolve behavioral issues or learning delays on a case-by-case basis as needed (see Behavioral Management Policy section).

## **JMS GUIDES**

Our JMS Lead Guides and staff come from an eclectic background. All of our Lead Guides are AMI Training Certified. AMI Montessori certification follows a program of rigorous training in Montessori philosophy, developmental psychology, and pedagogy. There are separate trainings for each developmental level, Assistants to Infancy (A to I), birth to three years old; Casa (Primary or Children's House) three to six years old; Elementary (6-12 years old) and Adolescence (13-18 years old). There are two main certifying agencies in the world - the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), which is an international organization; and the American Montessori Society (AMS), which is headquartered within the United States. The Juneau Montessori School is accredited by the AMI and all lead teaching staff hold diplomas from the AMI.

The primary goal of the Montessori Guide is to serve as a link between the classroom environment and materials and the child. The guide observes, reflects, and guides the child along a path to reach his/her fullest potential. We aim to balance spirit, mind and body in the healthy and whole child.

## **PARENTS**

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM (PIP)**

The Juneau Montessori School was created through the generous efforts of parents. In order to continue providing a quality Montessori program at an affordable cost, the School depends on the participation of each child's parents in the Parent Involvement Program (PIP). Each family is required to contribute a minimum of 48 hours per year, or 4 hours a month, to designated school projects and ongoing duties. You may opt to pay a \$40 per month (\$480 per year) "work credit" in lieu of your time or make an in-kind donation as requested by the staff. The value of the items donated will be considered at market value. The level of contribution remains at \$40 per month.

It is the responsibility of the family to document all time, in-kind donations or money given to the School in the Parent Involvement log located in front of the communication files located by your child's classroom prior to the end of the month. A parent volunteer, elected by the membership, typically serves as the PIP coordinator to assist parents and the ED in accounting of PIP.

## **VOLUNTEERS IN THE CLASSROOMS**

The Juneau Montessori School welcomes volunteers into the classroom. Regular volunteers in the classroom must have an application and three references on file, as well as go through the fingerprinting and background check system required by the State of Alaska Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers. A regular volunteer is defined as a person who works with children several times a week.

Temporary or short-term volunteers are welcome in the classroom at the guide's discretion and supervision. It is necessary for volunteers to keep the school administration informed of their participation and to sign in and out of the office.

Parents have a standing invitation to share their expertise, hobbies, family culture and traditions, pictures or stories with their children's class. Talk to your child's lead guide to schedule your visit(s).

## **PARENT-LEAD GUIDE CONFERENCES & COMMUNICATION**

Parent conferences are scheduled twice a year to discuss the child's progress and any special concerns or needs he/she may have. Parents or the lead guide may also schedule a conference at any other time either party feels it is advisable.

Beyond the semi-annual conferences, JMS maintains an 'open-door' policy when it comes to communication with parents. Research supports early intervention to address and even correct health and/or behavior issues, so we strongly encourage parents to contact lead guides or the ED when they have any concerns about their child. Similarly, the lead guides will inform parents if they have specific concerns about a child's behavior or progress. In most cases it is not appropriate to discuss these concerns in front of the child or other children, so we encourage parents to schedule a time when they can meet with JMS staff without children present.

We also appreciate it when parents inform us about progress or new skills that the child is showing at home.

## **OTHER COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

Parents are welcome to visit the School and are encouraged to schedule a time with the office and lead guide. Observations may be scheduled through the office and typically occur

between 9:00 and 9:30 am., Tuesday through Thursday. Children appreciate and benefit greatly from the interest parents show in their activities away from home. It is best, however, to plan visits after the first month of attendance is completed, when the child's community is more stable and the classroom routine is set. Parents also have a standing invitation to join the child's class for lunch and outdoor recess any time. If you call the office ahead of time (even 15 minutes) the classroom staff will make sure to set a place for you.

If your child is in the Toddler Room and you'd like to have lunch with the class, please be ready to take the toddler home with you after lunch.

A file is provided near the child's classroom for the family of each child. These files provide a mechanism for school-to-adult communications, including incident reports and monthly tuition and PIP statements. Please remember to check your file every day.

Classroom newsletters are issued periodically throughout the year. These are designed to keep parents informed about the activities of the classroom and the school. In addition, other letters are sometimes issued to parents announcing special events (some requiring signed permission), reminding parents of current policies, or establishing new policies. All correspondence is electronic, posted through the JMS google group. Please let the ED or AA know if you are not connected to the internet and would prefer paper notices.

We will post paper copies of all current information on the bulletin board located in the main hallway just past the Toddler Community. This where you will find the most current information about the Parent Involvement Program, committee meetings, special events, JMS Board meetings and actions. Please look at them on a regular basis.

JMS has a lending library containing books and DVDs about the Montessori Method and other child-related subjects. These materials are located upstairs in the office to the left of the stairs. Materials are checked out on an honor system. There is a sign-out sheet next to the bookshelf where you may write the title of the book/DVD/article, your name and the date. Parent education evenings will be held throughout the school year and will include background in Montessori theory, materials and parenting techniques. It is very important for parents to attend these events in order to promote consistency and understanding between home and school environments. Parent evenings are scheduled in advance and childcare is typically provided.

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

All parents or legal guardians are members of the Juneau Montessori School Corporation. At the annual meeting parents receive an annual report of the school operations. At this time new Board candidates are elected to serve on the Board of Directors. Notification of the Annual meeting is provided in the School Calendar and posted throughout the school at least 10 days prior to the meeting.



## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

### **ADMISSION POLICIES**

To be admitted to the program, parents or guardians must accept that JMS is a Montessori School and be willing to understand what Montessori pedagogy is all about in order to be supportive of our program and able to establish the Montessori school - home connection.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

JMS admits students and administers school policy without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, religion, economic status, physical handicap, marital status, sexual orientation, or age. Preference will be given to children who are siblings of enrolled or previously enrolled children, and children who have other Montessori experience

**To be admitted into the Toddler Program**, a child must be 15 months old and walking independently.

**To be admitted to the Primary Program**, a child must be toilet trained and at least 3 years of age. Enrollment in this program is a three-year (and in some cases even four-year) commitment as one year's work builds upon the next in the classroom. Children complete their kindergarten year in our program, allowing the children to develop their leadership skills by completing the first plane of development in the same environment. Spending three years in a multi-age program encourages beneficial social interaction and allows children to build on their skills year by year, affording the children a sense of mastery in the environment by the end of their experience within it.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

### **Application Process:**

Parents interested in enrolling a child should become acquainted with our program by following these simple enrollment procedures:

- **Parents Observe in the classroom.** This is an opportunity to view the classroom to determine if our program is the kind of environment families would like for their child.
- **Visit with the Executive Director.** This gives parents an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about your observation and to hear more about our program.

- **Complete a waitlist application form and return it with the 35.00 non-refundable application fee.**

Admission is dependent on current enrollment, occurring throughout the year. Once your application is on file, we will inform you of the next available opening for your child.

*Juneau Montessori School reserves the right to draw children from the waiting list according to the preferences listed in "Admission Policies" and as necessary to balance the age and gender ratios of the class.*

### **Upon Acceptance:**

The Executive Director, Lead Guides and the parents will agree on enrollment dates. A \$200 non-refundable deposit will be required within ten days from the time parents receive confirmation of enrollment. This deposit is applied towards the student's tuition reserve.

### **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

The Registration packet with the following forms must be completed and signed by the parents/legal guardians:

- Emergency Child Record
- Tuition/Program Agreement
- Waiver of Liability/Field Trip Permission / Photo Release
- Agreement of Parental Responsibilities

Parents must also provide:

- Current Immunization Records or a State approved Medical Immunization Exemption Form
- First Month Tuition and Tuition Reserve. These must be paid as outlined in the Tuition and Fees Policies (below)
- Updated Child Care Assistance Authorization (if necessary)

All information must be kept current. **Parents are responsible for notifying the office immediately of any changes as necessary.**

### **MEETING THE CHILD'S LEAD GUIDE**

Once the child is enrolled, the lead guide will contact the parents prior to the child's starting date to schedule a parent/lead guide orientation conference. This will give parents, the child, and the guide an opportunity to meet each other, discuss information about the child and give the child a chance to see the classroom prior to his or her first day of school.

## **TUITION POLICIES**

The Board of Directors annually sets the fee policy. JMS accepts families participating in Child Care Assistance programs as well as Tlingit and Haida, SEAFOM, GSA and others. Authorizations must be presented prior to enrollment. Parents are responsible for their monthly co-payment as established by JMS policies.

## **TUITION RESERVE**

Tuition Reserve is equal to one full month's tuition and is to be applied to your child's last month of attendance with the Juneau Montessori School. On or before the first day of attendance, a Tuition Reserve must be paid or a payment contract for Tuition Reserve must be entered. Tuition Reserve for families that participate in any Child Care Assistance program will be limited to the \$200 deposit if their co-payment is equal or less than \$200.00. If their co-payment is more than \$200, their tuition reserve must be equal to their co-payment.

## **TUITION**

Our programs are calculated in a 12-month cycle and paid in 12 equal monthly payments. Adjustments of co-payments for families receiving child care assistance will be made when their level of assistance changes as authorized by the childcare assistance agency. The Executive Director will allow for exception of a monthly payment from time to time with a payment contract.

*Monthly payments are due by the tenth of each month and are applied to the current month's tuition. No tuition credit is given for absences and/or vacations.*

## **LATE FEES AND FINANCE CHARGES**

A late fee of \$25.00 will be imposed to payments received after the 10th day of the month unless a prior arrangement has been made with the Executive Director.

## **COLLECTION POLICY FOR DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS**

Should a family be delinquent for one month, the Executive Director will notify them in writing. The family will receive a statement showing the balance due plus any late fees. If payment is not received by the last day of the month, the existing tuition reserve shall be applied to the outstanding balance. Failure to bring the account current will cause the child to be unenrolled immediately. The Executive Director will retain and furnish the collection agency with all applicable parental information necessary to execute collection of the balance due.

Special circumstances may warrant alternative payment schedules. The Executive Director has the discretion to negotiate a repayment plan. The plan must be entered into during the month the account became delinquent, and must have a term of repayment no later than the end of the semester. Late fees and additional finance charges calculated at the interest rate of 1.5%/month (18% per annum) will be assessed to the remaining balance. The school will only enter into one repayment agreement per family per year. Notification will be provided to the Board of Directors for informational purposes (confidentiality will be sustained through this process).

### **NON SUFFICIENT FUND (NSF) CHECK POLICY**

There will be a \$25 charge for all NSF checks received by the Juneau Montessori School. No exceptions.

### **CHANGES IN ENROLLMENT STATUS**

In order to ensure the financial stability of the school, JMS maintains a specific number of full time, and school day students in each classroom. Children may not switch from one position to another (i.e. from a full time position to a school day or a part time position) without previous authorization from the Executive Director. It will be considered on a space available basis.

### **EXTRA HOURS AND LATE PICK-UP FEES**

The JMS staff works hard to provide quality care for each child and to maintain the appropriate ratio of staff to children. Deviation without notification from the scheduled drop-off and pick-up times for school-day children (8a – 3:30pm) compromises our ability to coordinate staff schedules and present an over-time burden we are not willing to place on the staff. If no prior arrangements have been made for school-day students, parents will be charged 9.00 an hour for time outside of the scheduled school day. For extended-day students, parents will be charged \$25 if delayed between 5:30-5:35 pm and an additional \$1.00/min for every minute after 5:35 pm. Late pick-up fees will be billed on a monthly basis and will appear in the next month's invoice.

If planned in advance, however, parents of children on the school-day schedule may occasionally pre-arrange for extra hours before and after their regular schedule with the Executive Director at an additional cost of \$9/hr. Extra hours will be billed monthly. Arrangements must be made with the Executive Director at least 2 hours prior to the planned extra hours.

### **WITHDRAWAL NOTICE**

If for any reason you must withdraw your child from the program prior to the completion of his/her Kindergarten year, the school requires *written* notice of your intent to do so at least 15

days prior to the effective date of withdrawal. Once this notice is served, your child's tuition reserve will be applied to the last month's tuition. **Failure to give the school 15 days' notice will result in forfeiture of the tuition reserve.**

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY**

In Montessori environments, the children are allowed freedom of choice to the extent that their choices do not disrupt the overall harmony and functioning of their community. Children may not abuse or disrespect their classmates, guides, other individuals, the materials or the environment. Rather than using rewards or punishments as an external control of a child's behavior, Montessori environments foster the development of spontaneous self-discipline by providing a balance between the liberties that the child is afforded and the limits necessitated by social constraints.

In order to accomplish the goal of creating safe and peaceful environments, the staff of the Juneau Montessori School (JMS) works closely with each child's family to support an understanding of the expectations of this kind of environment. The fundamental expectation of all Montessori environments is one of respect: respect for oneself, others, the environment, and the tools that we use. Regarding behaviors toward others, all members of our community are expected to be respectful and courteous to one another. Disagreements and conflicts are expected to be resolved through civil and candid discussions, rather than through harmful words or actions. Children in group care will inevitably be faced with more conflict than what is experienced at home, and while we expect children to use techniques of conflict resolution, we also recognize that they are in the process of creating self-control and spontaneous self-discipline. We do not expect perfect behaviors; we expect to observe children in the process of developing the tools necessary to resolve conflicts that they inevitably encounter in their social interactions.

## **BEHAVIOR PROCEDURE**

As much as possible we try to solve all behavioral issues within the classroom community through the use of grace and courtesy lessons, teachable moments, and techniques of conflict resolution. When a child's needs are met very few corrective measures need to be taken; however, there are some cases when a child's behaviors require a more direct intervention. When necessary, the adult(s) in the environment will use one of the following techniques to manage individual incidences of misbehavior in the classroom:

- ✓ The child will be redirected to another activity.
- ✓ The child will be directed to work by him/herself and/or at a suitable distance from the group.
- ✓ If the child refuses to cooperate, or continues to be disruptive or is a danger to himself or others, the adult will gently remove the child from the classroom. An adult will always remain with the child.
- ✓ If the child's behavior continues to disrupt the functioning of the classroom, the parents will be contacted to explain further options up to removing the child from the school.

## **DOCUMENTATION WITH INCIDENT REPORTS**

When the traditional classroom techniques outlined above prove insufficient, the lead guide will communicate behavior difficulties to the parent as soon as they are recognized through the use of incident reports. These reports are a useful tool for tracking patterns of behavior in order to better evaluate the needs of the child in the classroom, and for communicating patterns of behavior and concerns to parents that will allow the parents to better address issues at home with their child.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

When the lead guide determines that a child is repeatedly exhibiting a pattern of inappropriate behavior that is disruptive to the classroom environment, or that places the child or others at risk, the lead guide will request an in-person meeting with the child's parents in order to determine the cause of the behaviors and to develop a corrective action plan with the Pedagogical Consultant. In addition to its internal resources, JMS has many external resources available to it through REACH, the Pediatric division of Bartlett Memorial Hospital, the Juneau School District, AEYC and other community services. If a child's behaviors require specialized attention, the use of a corrective action plan allows the lead guide to be proactive in putting the parent and an appropriate resource person in contact with one another to provide the support or the intervention the child needs.

The Executive Director, the Pedagogical Consultant will attend the meeting with the Lead Guide and family. The corrective action plan will be presented in writing and after the meeting will be signed by all present; the ED, PC, lead guide and parent(s). The parents will receive a copy of the corrective action plan and a copy will be retained by JMS. Failure of a parent to participate in development of a corrective action plan is cause for removing a child from the Juneau Montessori School. The corrective action plan will be updated as necessary, in accordance with the above procedure, to meet the changing developmental needs of the child.

## **DISMISSAL OF A CHILD FROM JMS**

If, after development and implementation of a corrective action plan, the lead guide believes the child's behaviors remain inappropriate, or are so extreme as to pose a threat to him/herself or others, the lead guide will, in writing, recommend to Pedagogical Consultant that the child be removed from the JMS environment. The lead guide's recommendation shall include a summary of all actions undertaken to help the child and shall include why the lead guide believes removing the child from the environment is the only remaining viable option. A copy of the lead guide's written recommendation will be given to the parent.

Within ten school days of receiving the lead guide's written recommendation and input from the Pedagogical Consultant, the pedagogical committee (made up of Board Members and PC) will meet and take action on the recommendation. In arriving at its decision, the pedagogical committee shall review the child's history, including, but not limited to, documented incident reports, the parent's participation in the development and implementation of a corrective action plan, and the child's progress subsequent to implementation of any corrective action plan. The parent(s) of the child shall be invited to attend this meeting of the pedagogical committee in order to convey their questions, perceptions, concerns and answer any questions from the committee. However, the parent(s) shall not be entitled to participate in the deliberations of the pedagogical committee.

No later than three school days after the decision of the pedagogical committee, the Executive Director and the lead guide shall meet with the parent and advise the parent of the pedagogical committee's decision. If the Executive Director is unavailable, a member of the pedagogical committee will participate in the meeting in lieu of the Executive Director. If the parents refuse to meet with the Executive Director and the lead guide, written notification shall be provided to the parent informing the parent of the decision of the pedagogical committee.

If it is the decision of the pedagogical committee that the child be removed from the JMS environment, the parent may appeal the decision to the JMS Board of Directors by submitting a written request for review of the pedagogical committee's decision to the JMS Administrator. The parent's grievance will be included on the agenda of the Board's next regularly scheduled Board meeting as an item for executive session. The JMS Administrator shall provide the parent with advance written notification of the Board meeting at which the parent's grievance will be heard. This notice shall include an invitation for the parent to attend the Board meeting. The lead guide and ED will attend the board meeting. The child may not attend JMS during the pendency of any such grievance. The decision of the Board with respect to the grievance is final.

It is the policy of the JMS to work together with the family and other available resources to meet the needs of each child enrolled in the program. If, however, JMS is unable to meet the needs of the child, then the parents will be responsible for finding alternative care for his/her child.

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Children with disabilities or special needs are admitted on an individual basis. The Executive Director and the lead guide will assess the child within the context of the school's program ensuring two things: 1) the program adequately meets the child's needs and does not compromise the safety and well-being of him or herself, other students, or 2) the child's participation in the program doesn't disrupt the regular operations of the school. The JMS may limit the number of children with special needs enrolled in the program dependent upon the needs of the child and classroom environment as mentioned above.

The Juneau Montessori School Special Needs Policy is distinct from our Behavior Management Plan. As a small school, we lack sufficient resources to properly serve some children who have intellectual, language, physical, emotional or behavioral conditions that are considered atypical for a child's age or stage of development. Our guides are specially trained in the Montessori Method and philosophy of education, and unfortunately are unable to educate children with profound learning differences. Our guides, however, are also qualified to be constantly alert to any special needs that a child may have, and will communicate with the parents/guardians and our Executive Director if a child appears to need help outside the range of a typical Montessori classroom environment in order to be successful for the short or long term.

If the Juneau Montessori School suspects a possible undiagnosed need of a child, our lead guide and pedagogical committee will guide the family through the process of making referrals to outside screening resources, hopefully providing parents/guardians with greater ease as they follow up with consultations and evaluations in a timely way. Often, the most successful programs for children with special needs are those taught by guides who have credentials to work with this group of children.

Communication is key to positive outcomes. If a child appears to have special needs or if needs are actually diagnosed by a professional, the Juneau Montessori School requires that the parents/guardians provide their written consent to allow us to converse and plan with (1) those who evaluated the child and (2) those who may be able to provide helpful information and/or resources regarding the child's disability. We also ask that the parents/guardians also meet with the lead guide, pedagogical consult and Executive Director to determine the appropriateness of continued enrollment at our school. Should there be mutual agreement between the Juneau Montessori School and a family that a child remain in our school with special assistance, the parents/guardians are responsible for accessing and paying for these resources themselves. Again, our staff is available to facilitate these discussions and to support families in their search for additional resources.

*“An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of man, the enhancement of his value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.”*

Maria Montessori, Education and Peace

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN**

Children must be under direct staff supervision at all times, maintaining an adult to child ratio as set by the state of Alaska Childcare Licensing Office.



## **OPERATIONS SCHEDULE**

JMS operates from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday to Friday. The school day is 8:00 to 3:30pm and Extended Day/Aftercare is 7:30 to 8:00am and 3:30pm to 5:30pm.

An example of a Montessori Day

7:30 – 8:30	Drop off
8:30 – 11:00	Work Cycle
11:00 – 12:00	Lunch
12:00-1:00	Outdoor Play
1:00-3:00	Nap Time
1:30 – 3:00	Extended Day
3:30 –	School Day End
3:30-5:30	Aftercare

## **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

JMS operates year-round and builds into the calendar periods of time for deep cleaning, refreshing the environments, training staff, and attending AMI Refresher courses, as well as closures for Holidays. The calendar closely models the Juneau School District calendar for the academic year with a more relaxed outdoor exploration model during the summer.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSURES**

The School may close temporarily if severe weather conditions or natural disasters make it unsafe for children or staff to travel to the School. We follow the School District Advisory for weather related closures. The School may also close if the building is without heat, water, or electricity for a length of time where it becomes a health and/or safety emergency necessitating the closure. JMS will make every effort to notify parents in a timely manner of such closures. Weather related school closures are announced on the radio.

## **ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND PROMPTNESS**

A relaxed and predictable preparation time helps children arrive at school happy and eager to learn. Attendance is taken daily. Please be sure you sign your child in and out every day on the attendance sheet provided by your child's classroom door. Our program is designed to be a 5-day per week program to meet the children's need for consistency and order in their daily lives. Consistency in attendance helps children develop a positive attitude toward their work and also helps them develop social skills and a greater sense of community. Please notify the school of any anticipated or impromptu absences so the guides may make plans for the day.

Please help your child arrive on time each day. You may bring your child as early as 7:30 a.m. for full time students or by making arrangements for early drop off with the staff. Children should be arriving between 8:00 and 8:15 am and should be in class by 8:30 am

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Records and information pertaining to an individual child or the parents are treated as confidential except as required by staff in working with the child and the family, by the State licensing representatives in licensing the facility, or by the staff in the case of reporting situations which may require protective services.

## **CUSTODY ISSUES**

JMS observes the following guidelines that relate to custody of a child.

- The parent who registers a child is financially responsible for all tuition unless the other parent has signed a separate agreement.
- Only persons listed on the emergency card will be allowed to pick up children. If one parent is to be prevented from picking up a child, we must have a certified copy of the court order on file.
- *When custody is shared, all school registration and permission forms must be signed by both parents.* JMS will not be responsible for keeping track of parents' schedules. Please keep us informed about drop-off and pick up schedules, phone numbers, etc. It is our preference to communicate with both parents at the same time whenever possible (i.e. conferences, e-mails, etc.) to avoid misunderstandings.

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS**

In order to protect each child, it is the School's policy to refuse to release a child to anyone other than those listed on the Emergency Card. If any person other than the parent or parent approved individuals is to pick up the child, staff must be notified ahead of time by the parent. A valid ID must be presented at the time of pick-up.

Parents are entirely responsible for the transportation of their child to and from the School each day.

## **LATE CHILD PICK-UP PROCEDURE**

It is the responsibility of the parents to notify the office in advance of any changes in their pick-up arrangements (see Extra Hours and Late Pick-Up Fees section). Call the school and

leave a message on the answering machine. The last staff member in the school will always check the machine for messages.

Parents should know that in the event a child has not been picked up by closing time (5:30 pm) staff will follow the procedures listed below:

1. REMAIN AT THE SCHOOL WITH THE CHILD.
2. Try to contact parents at work locations. Each child's emergency card has this information and phone lists are available in each classroom too. If unable to contact them, then go to # 3.
3. Call the child's home to locate a parent. If a teenage sibling or other family member is allowed to pick up the child, have them do so as quickly as possible. If no response from home, then go to #4.
4. Call the individuals listed as *emergency contacts and/or persons authorized to pick up the child from the school* and ask them to come pick up the child as quickly as possible. If unable to reach any one, then go to #5.
5. Call the Executive Director. Whenever possible, the Executive Director will return to the School to remain with the child.
6. After an hour of waiting at the school, and doing all of the above, the Office of Children's Services, 465-1650 will be notified of the situation. They can take the child into protective custody until parents can be located. The JMS representative will leave a note on the outside door of the school for the parents with the whereabouts of their child and phone numbers they may call.

The time when the child finally leaves the school will be recorded and this information becomes part of our attendance record and is used to assess the amount due for late pick up fees.

#### **RELEASE OF STUDENT RECORDS**

Parents must make written requests for the release of student records. If the records are to be sent to a third party (e.g. another school) the request must be specifically made for that party.

#### **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Communication is the most important tool to ensure a successful relationship between the school and parents. The JMS staff makes every effort to keep parents informed of their child's experience at school, and of the events and school schedule.

**Should you have concerns regarding your child's experience at school, please speak about them directly with your child's guide.** He or she is the one most closely acquainted with your child and the workings of the classroom, and can best answer your questions and concerns.

If your concern is about the guide and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with the guide, please make an appointment to meet with the Executive Director.

If you have spoken with your child's guide and feel the matter is unresolved or have further questions, please address your concern with the Executive Director. She has the authority to address any issue, and will endeavor to rectify errors or resolve possible conflicts. She may suggest an appointment together with the guide present to better address unresolved issues.

Questions or concerns regarding the operation of the school, financial concerns, or matters concerning program and staff should be taken directly to the Executive Director. The JMS board sets policies and makes decisions of fiscal and legal nature therefore the Director may suggest addressing further questions about these policies with the Board itself. Issues to be considered by the Board must be made in writing and addressed to the Board President. You may be asked to attend a Board meeting to discuss the issue in person. However, addressing the issue is at the discretion of the Board.

## **REGULATORY ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Child Care Program Office has primary regulatory and licensing responsibility for the child care facilities in Alaska, including investigation of complaints. The School is a fully licensed facility under State licensing requirements, and any complaints regarding the facility or its program which cannot be satisfactorily resolved with the Executive Director may be referred to the Juneau office.

State of Alaska Licensing Agency:

Child Care Program Office  
Southeast Regional Office  
P.O. Box 110640  
Juneau, AK 99811  
907-465-4756

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING**

The School will conform to the requirements of the Alaska State laws in reporting suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect. To report child abuse and neglect call 465-1650 or 465-4756

## **HEALTH AND ILLNESS**

*Please call the School in the morning if your child will be absent.*

We follow all State of Alaska immunization requirements and compliance is mandatory.

***Keep your child at home if he is sick or uncomfortable.***

For the health of your child, the other children and adults in the classroom, families are asked to keep their children home when the following situations exist:

1. If the child has any illness which interferes with full participation in school activities--including going outdoors
2. If the child has a fever (oral, otic, or axillary) of 100.5° or higher.
3. If the child has ongoing vomiting and is unable to eat.
4. If the child has diarrhea so severe or frequent that they child is unable to get to the toilet in time to not have an accident.
5. If the child has a persistent cough or severe sore throat, or nasal discharge of any color that is associated with inability to function in the school environment.
6. If the child is fussy, cranky, or generally not him/herself--this is often a symptom of oncoming illness.
7. If the child is overly tired.
8. If the child is taking medication which effects his full participation in school.
9. If the child has any of the following:
  - ear infection with ear drainage
  - yellow skin or eyes
  - red eyes with discharge (pink-eye or bacterial conjunctivitis)
  - infected, untreated skin patches or lesions
  - difficult or rapid breathing
  - severe itching of body or scalp
  - skin rashes, excluding diaper rash, lasting more than one day
  - swollen joints
  - visibly enlarged lymph nodes
  - blood or pus from ear, skin, urine or stool
  - loss of appetite characterized by refusing all solids
10. If the child has symptoms which indicate the following diseases, chicken pox, head lice, scabies, impetigo, hand/foot/mouth, ringworm and strep throat.
11. Children who have symptoms of illness may be admitted to or remain in the school only when there is written documentation from a licensed physician (or verbal with written

follow-up), stating that the child has been diagnosed and poses no serious health risk to the child or other children.

12. If the child has symptoms of a communicable disease you will be asked to have your child evaluated by a physician prior to returning to school. Communicable diseases should be reported to the Executive Director so that a notice of exposure can be posted at the School.

Since the JMS provides group care, no child will be excused from classroom or outdoor activities as we have no additional staff to watch him or her.

A child who becomes sick or develops a fever or vomits during the day will be isolated from the others and the parents or emergency contact called to come pick him/her up. **THE CHILD IS REQUIRED TO BE ABSENT FROM THE SCHOOL FOR A FULL 24-HOUR PERIOD AFTER THE CHILD EXHIBITS NO MORE SYMPTOMS BEFORE HE/SHE IS PERMITTED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL. THE CHILD MUST BE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT THE AID OF SYMPTOM SUPPRESSING MEDICATIONS SUCH AS TYLENOL, IBUPROFEN, COUGH MEDICINE, ETC.**

## **MEDICATION**

Medications will only be administered with the written and signed authorization of the parent which identifies the medication, the dosage, and the time(s) it is to be given, any special instructions and the duration of the authorization. The School has forms available for this purpose. *Children are not permitted to keep their medications in their lunch boxes, or to administer it by themselves. THIS INCLUDES VITAMINS AND HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES.* Medications must come in the original package or with the pharmacy label clearly marked with the child's name and directions for administering.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCIES**

JMS holds a fire drill every month. In addition to this drill, emergency and safety procedures are also included in the regular curriculum. Minor accidents occurring during school hours will receive the prompt and careful attention of staff. Accident/Incident Report forms will be filled out and given to the child's parents. In the event of accidents that would require medical attention, but are not life threatening, the parents will be advised immediately and staff may transport the child to the doctor office or medical service of the parent's choice. In the event of a serious accident, the school staff will call 911 for assistance. The child will be transported to Bartlett Regional Hospital by ambulance (at parents' expense) for further medical attention. Parents or emergency contact person will be notified immediately.

## **NUTRITION FOR LUNCH AND SNACKS**

1) Children bring their own lunch. Please send fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads, and foods with protein. A sensible lunch includes nutritious food items the child can eat in any order.

2) Please *do not* send “treats” or “junk food” -- no soft drinks, juice, gum, candy, or sugar-filled, empty-calorie desserts. These items will be removed from the child’s lunch and returned to parents at the end of the day.

3) Please show your child how to open and close his/her lunch box and thermos. Your child will enjoy greater independence if she/he can set up and begin lunch with as little adult assistance as possible.

## **SNACKS**

The School provides a nutritious snack in the morning and in the afternoon and strives to serve organic fruits, vegetables and grains as much as is possible. Children prepare many of the snacks offered by participating in a variety of cooking and food preparation projects such as grinding flour for bakery items such as bread, bread pudding, muffins, etc. We attempt to serve whole foods, rather than processed foods containing additives, preservatives and additional sugar.

The staff will make every effort to accommodate children who have allergies or other problems in relation to food. Please notify the School in writing on the Application Form and the Emergency Card of your child's allergies or other food concerns.

In addition to snacks, a variety of individual food preparation activities such as bread slicing, spreading, fruit & vegetable cutting, juice squeezing, etc. occur in the classrooms during the day on a regular basis. Children may choose these activities if they are hungry during the day.

## **SPECIAL OCCASION SNACKS BIRTHDAYS/CELEBRATION OF LIFE**

Parents of Primary children wishing to send a special birthday snack or nonfood item in honor of their child's birthday are most welcome to do so. Please discuss food items with the guide prior to the birthday. Sugarless and additive-free foods are preferred, and there may be allergies within the community that may prevent certain items as a group snack. As part of the child's birthday celebration, parents are encouraged to send for the day a small selection of photographs representing the child's growth from birth and a short letter describing landmarks

(such as previous birthdays, starting school etc.). All photographs will be safely returned. Parents are welcome to attend their child's birthday celebration at school.

### **REST PERIODS (NAPS)**

Each child is required to rest quietly every day for at least 30 minutes. Some children nap, while other children engage in quiet activities after the rest period.

Children who nap at JMS should bring a fitted crib sheet and a blanket for naptime. A small pillow is optional. All sleeping gear must be inside a pillowcase or nap bag, with all items clearly labeled. Rest gear must be taken home and laundered weekly. Each child is provided a space in which to keep their nap gear and a box for their personal belongings.

### **VISITORS**

Parents of enrolled children are welcome and encouraged to visit, observe or participate at any time. If you'd like to set up a formal observation of the classroom or join us for lunch please call the office to make an appointment

### **CLOTHING**

Each child must have two or three complete changes of clothes (underwear, socks, pants, top) clearly labeled, available at the school each day the child is present. It is especially important that the parent (or person picking the child up) check the child's hook and shoe bin daily. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide appropriate gear for their children on a daily basis.

Children's clothing for school should be casual and simple which they can manage independently when using the bathroom. Dressy or expensive clothes that you do not want to be damaged by paint, glue, clay, scissors or outside play should not be worn to school.

Please do not send your child to school with clothing, accessories, lunch boxes or other items that have any kind of advertising, logos, TV or movie characters on it. These items are extremely distractive to the children.

Children are also required to have a pair of "inside shoes" to be worn during the day. The shoes should be easy to put on and take off. Velcro shoes or slip-on sneakers are great. The shoes need to be sturdy and warm with an enclosed heel or straps to protect your child's feet in case of a fire drill or emergency. (Slippers or flip-flops do not meet this requirement).

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**



*The children play outside daily.* Children will not be taken outside during periods of high winds, driving rain, or extremely cold temperatures; however, in general, children will play outside during most rain and snow conditions. Parents must provide outer clothing appropriate to outside weather conditions *every day*. **Warm waterproof outdoor gear**, including snow pants, snow coat, boots, hats, and most importantly mittens. Each piece of outer clothing should be marked with the child's name. Each classroom maintains a "lost and found" bin as needed and it is disposed of periodically after a notice is posted.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### ***Toys from home may not be brought to School.***

Children may bring special items to tell a story about. In helping your child to decide if an item is appropriate to bring, please consider whether the item falls into any of the categories listed below:

- An item from nature (shell, insect, fossil etc.)
- An item that is beautiful to the senses (scented flower, music tape, photograph, prism etc.)
- A useful item (a tool or utensil the child can use -- hand drill, camera, small weaving loom etc.)
- An educational or culturally informative item

***Please note that weapons (or toy weapons) of any kind are not allowed in the school.***

## **GIFTS TO THE SCHOOL**

Oftentimes games, educational toys and books that are no longer used at home are very welcome at our school. Our full day program includes time for play with Legos, puzzles, and other activities that have been donated by parents. Please talk to your child's guide about appropriate gifts to the school.

## **OUTSIDE ADVENTURES**

Juneau Montessori School is located in one of the most beautiful places on earth. Our majestic and unique scenery enables our staff to support children's lessons about nature in extended ways. We are also fortunate to be able to choose from multiple opportunities for the engaging children with the outdoors within the vicinity of our school. Examples of ways in which children are able to interact with nature include walking field trips and time spent at Sandy Beach.

Staff will always keep the office informed of children's whereabouts when they are going someplace other than the playground. JMS has detailed, Specialized Activity Plans, in place and filed in the office that detail protocols in place to ensure optimum safety. These include but are not limited to Lead Guides taking emergency backpacks, cell phones, leaving a list of children who are on the outing and location of outing and all staff is CPR/First Aid Certified.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Occasionally the primary children go on field trips. JMS plans well ahead of the time for any field trip. A permission slip/field trip form will be sent home a week before the scheduled outing and will need to be signed and returned prior to student participation.

On the day of the field trip we may need extra parent volunteers to assist. If you are interested in helping out please let your guide know.

## **VIDEO/TV VIEWING**

Television and movie viewing are not a regular part of the school curriculum. No general TV viewing is allowed at any time. Children may occasionally view a film relevant to a current unit of study or topic of interest. Use of a video player is also allowed during parent information evenings when childcare is provided and video viewing will not to exceed one and a half hours in a 24 hour period. Only G-rated materials will be shown.

## **PROGRAM AND POLICY CHANGES**

Parents will be notified of any program change affecting their child. Our goal is to provide what is deemed in the best interest of the child, while keeping program transitions to a minimum. Special events or calendar changes will be notified in writing through the JMS google group, flyers or newsletters placed in your mailbox or file. Please check files and e-mail threads daily.

## **FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION**

Firearms and ammunition are prohibited in or on school grounds at all times.

## **ANIMALS AT THE FACILITY**

The Juneau Montessori School provides opportunities to have pets in the school for viewing and/or interaction. JMS staff will ensure appropriate safety measures at all times, as well as proper hand washing procedures after handling any animals. JMS staff will at times allow interactions between their pets and the children. Allergies to animals must be notified in the emergency card. Staff will show documentation of up-to-date vaccinations and health records from a veterinarian. Families who have pets that they could bring to school for a day or longer are encouraged to discuss an arrangement with their child's guide. Staff members' dogs are occasionally housed upstairs in the facility and occasionally accompany the children outside or on walks. The JMS Toddler Community houses Fire-belly toads and a Fire-belly newt in a vivarium environment, and maintains variances for these animals with Alaska State licensing.

## **SMOKING**

Smoking anywhere in the building or on school grounds is prohibited.

## **TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND POISONOUS PLANTS**

All plants within the environments of the children are non-poisonous. Toxic substances are limited to those materials used for the maintenance of the building such as; paint, adhesives for the tile flooring, waxes and other flooring materials, cleaning materials, etc. will be stored upstairs in the attic or downstairs in the laundry room where there is no child access.

## **INTERNET AND FACEBOOK POLICY**

We maintain a website: [www.juneaumontessorischool.org](http://www.juneaumontessorischool.org) and social media Facebook Page. We use these sites as way to promote our school to the Juneau community, share news with our current families, and disseminate information. If you do not want your child's picture on these sites, please submit a written request to the office.

*“Education is not just teaching in the usual sense of passing on a body of facts to the child in school; education is a form of protection, help given to obey life.”*

*Maria Montessori, Education and Peace*