



# Family Handbook

This handbook contains an overview of the policies and procedures for families of JMS. Its contents are informational and intended solely as a guide for families.

## ***OUR MISSION***

To help every child to reach their full potential through a Montessori education.

## ***OUR VISION***

To positively shape the future by cultivating the next generation of inquisitive, independent, socially responsible young citizens.

## ***OUR VALUES***

Community, respect, service, learning, peace.

## ***OUR PROGRAM***

Juneau Montessori School serves children ages 16 months through 6 years of age in a Montessori environment with the option of before- and after-school care. We have one young children's community serving children ages 16 months - 3 years old and two primary classrooms serving children ages 3-6 years old. We offer a beforecare program from 7:30-8 am and aftercare program from 3:30-5 pm. Children may enroll in aftercare once they are 2 years old.

<b>SECTION 1: Our Philosophy</b>	<b>3</b>
Welcome to Juneau Montessori!	3
What is Montessori?	4
<b>SECTION 2: About JMS</b>	<b>4</b>
Contacts	4
History of Juneau Montessori School	4
Our Building	4
Our Board of Directors	5
State of Alaska Licensing	5
AMI Accreditation	5
<b>SECTION 3: Calendar and Hours of Operation</b>	<b>6</b>
School Calendar	6
Breaks and Holidays	6

Vacations/Absences	6
Hours of Operation	6
Closures and Delays	6
<b>SECTION 4: Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>7</b>
Tuition	7
Fees	7
Scholarships and Financial Aid	8
Withdrawal of Enrollment	8
<b>SECTION 5: The Young Children’s Community</b>	<b>8</b>
Curriculum	8
Daily Schedule	8
What Your Child Needs at School	9
<b>SECTION 6: The Children’s House</b>	<b>10</b>
Curriculum	10
Daily Schedule	10
What Your Child Needs at School	11
<b>SECTION 7: What You Need to Know</b>	<b>12</b>
Dropoff	12
Pickup	12
Lunch and Snacks	12
Naptime	13
Outdoor Time	13
Field Trips and Walks	13
Communication Between Parents/Guardians and Staff	13
Birthdays	14
<b>SECTION 8: Health and Safety</b>	<b>14</b>
Illness	15
Medication	16
Incidents and Accidents	16
Security	17
Emergency Response Plan	17
Harassment	17
Weapons	17
Drugs and Alcohol	17
Animals	17
Toxic Substances and Poisonous Plants	17
Confidentiality	18
Release of Students	18
Child Abuse and Neglect	18
Custody Issues	18

Late Child Pickup Procedure	19
<b>SECTION 9: Managing Children’s Behaviors</b>	<b>19</b>
Meeting the Needs of Children and Parents/Guardians	19
Guiding Children’s Behavior	19
Redirection	20
Handling Aggression	20
Procedure for Handling Ongoing Behavioral Issues	21
Documentation of Behavior through Incident Reports	21
Development of Behavior Plans	21
Removal of a Child from JMS	21
Children With Special Needs	22
<b>SECTION 10: Family Involvement</b>	<b>22</b>
Parent/Guardian Volunteers	22
Committees and Board Service	22
<b>SECTION 11: Grievance Policy</b>	<b>23</b>

## SECTION 1: Our Philosophy

### Welcome to Juneau Montessori!

When I came to Juneau Montessori School as the Interim Executive Director in early 2020, I came with a limited working knowledge of Montessori pedagogy. I was quickly blown away. The staff’s honesty and respect towards the children, the careful preparation of real materials in each classroom, and the focused independence of children too young to even speak: the entire approach opened up a whole new way of working with children and harnessing their capabilities. Five years later the pedagogical philosophy now feels fully integrated into my life, and it’s forever changed how I see not just children, but the entire world we live in and construct for ourselves and each other.

It feels good to be independent, to do for oneself, to create and to learn. It feels good to be kind and to help others. We show ourselves respect when we engage with the world actively and positively, and children feel happy and respected when given the same opportunity. We support children with loving consistency and safe boundaries. We hold in our mind what we know each child to be capable of becoming and give them the time and the guidance to become.

When you join Juneau Montessori as a parent/guardian, grandparent, family member or friend, my hope is that you watch your child begin on a lifelong journey of growing self-efficacy, independence and strength. I hope you feel supported and know that your child is loved along their journey - they are. We love coming to work every day and we are so glad that you joined us, hopefully for many years. Long after your child graduates from Juneau Montessori, they will remain a member of our school community; in fact, they will be remembered by our staff for the rest of their lives. Thank you for entrusting us with your child. We can’t wait to get to know them.

Sincerely,  
Laura Talpey  
Executive Director

## What is Montessori?

The Montessori philosophy and method of education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, Italian female physician and one of the greatest educators of the 20th century. Thousands of schools across the world now use the Montessori Method which is based upon the understanding that the child is the driving force in their own education. Lessons are individualized with each child being guided through the learning process using sensorial and other materials that fit their specific needs and pace.

Montessori education is child-centered, experiential, collaborative and non-competitive with assessment focused on the child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development rather than a standardized grade.

At JMS we offer education for the whole child, recognizing each child's unique potential. We foster independence and the construction of self-discipline through a balance of freedom, discipline and limits within a carefully prepared environment.

Our program is designed to serve children through kindergarten. The kindergarten year is the capstone to the three-year-cycle of the primary program. When you join JMS, think ahead. Do you see your child staying here for kindergarten? Do you see them continuing in a Montessori environment down the line? It is not too early to plan ahead.

## SECTION 2: About JMS

### Contacts

Phone Number: (907) 364-3535

Address: 750 St. Ann's Ave, Douglas, AK 99824

Website: [www.juneaumontessorischool.org](http://www.juneaumontessorischool.org)

Executive Director/Main Email: [jms@juneaumontessori.org](mailto:jms@juneaumontessori.org)

Board Email: [board@juneaumontessori.org](mailto:board@juneaumontessori.org)

### History of Juneau Montessori School

The Juneau Montessori Center was founded in 1985 by dedicated Montessorians Catherine Fritz, Corrine Geldhof, and Dick Erman. It first opened in a private home in Fritz Cove and occupied several other spaces before it moved to the Mayflower Building and changed its name to Juneau Montessori School in 1997. JMS has been serving Juneau families ever since.

### Our Building

The Juneau Montessori School is located on Lingit Aani, in Taaku Kwan territory. Our school leases the Mayflower Building from the City & Borough of Juneau. The Mayflower Building, a nationally registered historic building, was erected in 1934 by the Bureau of

Indian Affairs and operated as a day school for Tlingit children from 1934-1942. It then served as a community center and a city office building, among other purposes, before it was leased to the founders of the Juneau Montessori School in 1997. Because of its past as a school for indigenous children, The Mayflower Building represents a significant piece of history for the Juneau community.

## Our Board of Directors

The Juneau Montessori School is a nonprofit governed by a Board of Directors. Our board seats up to nine members and meets once a month in person at JMS. Serving on the JMS board is a great way to get involved in your child's education and connect with our community. In addition, our board has several committees (fund development, finance, and pedagogy and policy) that meet on a quarterly basis.

## Our Staff

Each JMS classroom has a team of three adults: one lead guide and two assistants. Each lead guide has an Association Montessori Internationale Diploma (See *Section 2: Montessori* for more information). ALL staff have health and safety, first aid, and mandatory reporter training. All staff are required to have a valid background check in place.

In addition, we have floating staff to assist with daily operations and fill in when classroom staff are out.

Our staff come from diverse backgrounds and have a shared love of working with children. While your child will spend most of their time with their classroom team, they will get to know all of the JMS staff during outdoor time, beforecare and aftercare, and simply by being part of our community.

## State of Alaska Licensing

The Child Care Program Office has primary regulatory and licensing responsibility for the child care facilities in Alaska, including investigation of complaints. JMS is a fully licensed facility under State licensing requirements.

Child Care Program Office, Juneau Location:  
Goldstein Building, Room 512-517  
130 Seward Street  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: 907-465-4756

## AMI Accreditation

Our program is accredited by the [Association Montessori Internationale](#) (AMI). Every year we submit an application for renewal of our recognition status, and once every three years our program is visited by AMI consultants to determine that our program meets eligibility requirements. Such requirements include: classrooms maintain a full set of AMI-approved Montessori materials, lead guides are fully certified and follow proper Montessori pedagogical practices, and our daily schedule accommodates a 3-hour work cycle in the

morning and a 2-hour work cycle in the afternoon. For the Young Children's Community, these work cycles are 2 hours in the morning and an optional 1 hour in the afternoon.

## SECTION 3: Calendar and Hours of Operation

### School Calendar

Our school calendar can be found on our website, [www.juneaumontessorischool.org](http://www.juneaumontessorischool.org).

### Breaks and Holidays

Our program is year-round with breaks for holidays, inservice, and training. Our calendar closely follows the Juneau School District's calendar and can be found on our website. **No tuition credit is given for breaks and holidays.** Our staff work part of each break on inservice projects such as training, team building, material making, and deep cleaning. This time is critical for maintaining our program's excellence and reducing staff burnout. Our breaks are already factored into our monthly tuition rate, so the same amount is due each month.

### Vacations/Absences

No tuition credit is given for family vacations or absences.

### Hours of Operation

Beforecare: 7:30-8 am

School Day: 8 am-3:30 pm

Aftercare: 3:30-5 pm

### Closures and Delays

JMS generally follows the Juneau School District's decisions regarding weather-related closures or delays. Families will be notified of any closure or delay via Brightwheel.

In rare or extenuating circumstances, JMS may make an independent determination to close, delay, remain open, or close early regardless of the Juneau School District's status.

Reasons for closure may include:

- Concerns for the safety of students, families, and/or staff due to weather or other conditions
- Insufficient staffing to maintain safe operations or state-mandated adult:child ratios
- Facility issues or operational challenges
- Emergency situations

Closures or early dismissals may occur at any time during the day due to changing conditions. JMS reserves the right to close at its discretion to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our school community.

Tuition and fees will not be reimbursed or credited for closures, delays, or early dismissals.

## SECTION 4: Tuition and Fees

### Tuition

The Board of Directors sets the tuition rate annually. Families should expect an annual tuition rate increase of 1-1.5% at the start of our fiscal year, September 1st. Tuition is due on the 10th of each month and invoices are sent through Brightwheel, our school's platform, on the 1st of the month.

#### *Tuition Rates: 2025-2026*

	<b>School Day</b> (8-3:30pm)	<b>Beforecare</b> (7:30-8am)	<b>Aftercare</b> (3:30-5pm, children ages 2 and up)
<b>Young Children's Community</b> (16 months – 3 years old)	\$1,267	\$88	\$226
<b>Primary</b> (3-5 years old)	\$1,072	\$88	\$196
<b>Kindergarten</b>	\$858	\$88	\$196

### Fees

#### *Registration Fee*

There is a one-time registration fee of \$100 at the time of enrollment.

When you enroll in the program and we choose a start date, we will prorate your tuition based on the days of care offered that month.

#### *Late Fee*

Failure to pay tuition on time will result in written notice on Brightwheel or email. If your family becomes late on tuition for more than one month, the Executive Director will reach out to you to discuss a repayment plan. Failure to bring your account current may result in disenrollment of your child. The Executive Director may retain and furnish the collection agency with all applicable parent/guardian information necessary to execute collection of the balance due.

If you have extenuating circumstances, you may initiate a conversation with the Executive Director to set up a written payment plan. Payment plans are developed in conjunction with the family and are at the discretion of the Executive Director. If your family develops a payment plan but fails to follow the agreement of the plan, your child may be disenrolled.

### Late Pickup Fee

Late pickups are subject to a charge of \$25 per day per child. You must check out your child on Brightwheel by 3:30 pm (or 5 pm if your child is in aftercare) to avoid a late pickup fee.

## Scholarships and Financial Aid

Affording a Montessori education isn't easy, and we aim to make our program affordable for any family who wishes to attend. We accept CCAP, Tlingit & Haida, Coast Guard, and other types of tuition assistance, and we would be happy to walk you through these steps – just call or email us. If you do not qualify for these programs or still cannot afford JMS, we have a scholarship fund available to support several families each year. Aid is calculated and distributed on a rolling basis. See the JMS website ([www.juneaumontessorischool.org](http://www.juneaumontessorischool.org)), and call us anytime for more information or help with your application.

## Withdrawal of Enrollment

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. If you withdraw in the middle of the month, you forfeit the rest of that month's tuition.

# SECTION 5: The Young Children's Community

## Curriculum

The Montessori Young Children's Community (YCC), also known as the toddler program or Chickadee Room, serves children ages 16 months to 3 years old and is designed to feel less like a classroom and more like an extension of the home. Students build self-reliance and confidence while learning the practical life skills required to care for themselves and their environment. Functional independence is the goal and, "You can do it. I believe in you!" is the message we want the children to receive as they sweep, clean, dust and scrub their own space, learn to dress themselves, use the toilet, care for plants and animals, serve themselves food and water, eat with utensils, and more. Outside they rake leaves, shovel snow, and garden.

Language skills are increased through vocabulary building activities, games, and practice in expressing wants, needs and emotions using words. Adults guide social interactions by modeling respectful and courteous communications. The YCC is often the first step in a Montessori education and is the best place for a child to gain real life skills in a safe and nurturing setting.

## Daily Schedule

8-8:30am: Dropoff	Children arrive.
8-9:15am: Outdoor Time	Children start their day in the outdoor environment. They might play, sweep, draw with chalk, ride bikes, water plants, or shovel

	snow. If the weather is rough, they will have large motor movement time in the Gross Motor Room.
9:15-11:15am: Morning Work Cycle	Children return to the classroom to use the toilet, have a healthy snack prepared by our staff, and go through their morning work cycle. The guide works with children individually or in small groups.
11:15-11:45am: Gross Motor Time	Children go down to the Gross Motor room to run, jump, climb, ride bikes, sing, dance, slide, and play.
11:45am-12:30pm: Lunch	Children eat lunch in the classroom using placemats, napkins, and utensils. This is a time to practice mealtime manners and enjoy conversation with one another. Families provide a healthy lunch for their child.
12:30-2:30pm: Naptime	Children nap in the classroom on a provided cot. Blackout blinds are drawn and a sound machine is turned on to create a peaceful atmosphere.
2:30-3:30pm: End of Day/Afternoon Work Cycle	Children wake up from nap, use the toilet, have an afternoon snack, and prepare for pickup. They might have a short afternoon work cycle or go outside if the weather is nice.
3:30-5pm: Aftercare Program	Children play, color, and have an afternoon snack.

## What Your Child Needs at School

- Lunch.** A healthy lunch in a lunchbox. Please send fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads, and foods with protein. Avoid sugary foods like soft drinks, juice, candy, or desserts. The children practice eating with real plates, glasses and utensils.
- 3-4 t-shirts, pants, underwear, and socks.** These items are kept in your child's bin at school. You will be notified when their bin is running low. Simple clothes that make it easy for your child to dress and undress (elastic waistbands, etc.) are good choices.
- Outdoor gear:** Rain suit, rain boots, gloves, and a warm layer for spring/summer fall. Snow suit, warm jacket, hat, gloves, warm layers, and snow boots for winter.

- Diapers:** 20 diapers (pullup style). We will notify you when your stash is running low. Diaper cream is also optional. JMS provides baby wipes and tissues.
- One backpack or tote** which will come to school each morning and go home each night containing extra outerwear and lunch.
- Nap gear:** a blanket, small pillow, and stuffed animal (optional). Nap gear is left at school for the week and sent home to be laundered every Friday.

## SECTION 6: The Children’s House

### Curriculum

Our Children’s House classrooms, also known as the primary level classrooms (Black Bear Den and Raven’s Roost), serve children ages 3-6 years old and are carefully prepared learning environments where hands-on activities encourage children to explore and learn independently. The teacher acts as a guide, connecting the child to the environment and observing and supporting each child’s individual needs. By design, a Montessori classroom has both fine-motor and gross-motor movement opportunities built into the curriculum. Children manipulate materials to refine sensory perception and develop literacy and mathematical understanding. Montessori classrooms are designed to meet the needs of children in a mixed-age group, which helps promote social development. Children also have opportunities to engage in small group movement games throughout the morning, which provides a meaningful way to practice controlling their muscle movement while releasing energy. Children in our environments are given trust and autonomy for independence within a deeply collaborative, community-oriented framework that will foster the growth of functional independence, task persistence, and self-regulation.

### Daily Schedule

8-8:30am: Dropoff	Children arrive, put away their belongings, wash their hands, and start the day.
8-11am: Morning Work Cycle	Children spend the morning in the classroom, working on activities of their choosing at their own pace. The guide connects children to the environment through individual or small group lessons. A healthy snack prepared by our staff is available.
11-12: Lunch and Transition Outside	Children eat lunch in the classroom using placemats, napkins, and utensils. This is a time to practice mealtime manners and enjoy conversation with one another. Families provide a healthy lunch for their child.

12-1:30pm: Outdoor Time	Children have the opportunity to run, dig, throw and kick balls, climb, and play games with their friends. Walks to the beach and neighboring trails are common. We go outside every day, rain or shine, unless the weather is <i>really</i> rough.
1:00-3:00pm: Nap	Children go inside, take off their gear and go into the nap room to rest quietly on their cots. We have blackout shades and a sound machine to provide a restful environment.
1:30-3:30pm: Afternoon Work Cycle	The non-napping children have a second work cycle in the classroom. This is a time for older children to engage into more challenging work in reading, writing and math. A healthy snack prepared by our staff is available.
3:30pm: School Day Pickup	Children pack up their belongings and head home.
3:30-5pm: Aftercare Program	Children play, color, and have an afternoon snack.

## What Your Child Needs at School

With fifty+ young children in our building, we are constantly finding and organizing gear! **Please make sure ALL your child's belongings are clearly labeled with his/her name.** We recommend writing your child's name or initials in Sharpie directly on all their items.

- Lunch.** A healthy lunch in a lunchbox that your child can open by him/herself. Please send fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads, and foods with protein. Avoid sugary foods like soft drinks, juice, candy, or desserts.
- 3-4 full changes of clothing:** t-shirt, pants that can be pulled on and off by your child, underwear, socks. These items are kept in your child's bin at school. You will be notified when their bin is running low.
- Outdoor gear:** Rain suit, rain boots, gloves, and a warm layer for spring/summer fall. Snow suit, warm jacket, hat, gloves, warm layers, and snow boots for winter.
- Inside shoes** to be kept at school. These shoes should be easy to put on and take off and are comfortable to walk in. Velcro or slip-on sneakers are great. We do not allow light-up shoes. Some classrooms provide indoor shoes; check with your lead guide.
- Nap gear:** a blanket, small pillow, and stuffed animal (optional). Nap gear is left at school for the week and sent home to be laundered every Friday. For children who still nap.

## SECTION 7: What You Need to Know

### Dropoff

Drop off is from 8-8:30 am, or 7:30-8 am if your child is in beforecare. Your child must be checked in each day on Brightwheel by scanning the QR code located at each door. Please drop off your child on time during the dropoff window. The morning is an important time for children to receive lessons from their guide and build community with their classroom peers. When children are dropped off late, it is disruptive to the other children who have already begun working.

If your child will be late or absent for any reason (appointments, vacations, illness, etc.), please notify us on Brightwheel.

When you drop off your child, please stand by the classroom door and allow your child to put away their belongings by themselves. This sends the message that they are capable! Give them a hug or a kiss goodbye and head out. It is normal for children to cry or be uncomfortable when separating from a parent/guardian, especially when they are first starting school. As hard as it can be, try not to linger as this can prolong your child's discomfort. There are trained adults ready to support them through their feelings. Most of the time, an upset child feels better after a few minutes and is ready to begin their day.

### Pickup

When you pick up your child, you are welcome to enter their classroom and help them pack up their belongings. Check their cubby and their clothing bin on a weekly basis to ensure that they have changes of clothes and adequate outdoor gear. If your child has an accident during the day, there will be a bag on their hook containing their soiled clothes. On Fridays, make sure to take home your child's nap gear (which will be packed up in the hallway) to be laundered.

### Lunch and Snacks

Families provide lunch daily for their child. We strongly encourage healthy foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and protein. Please avoid sending sugary foods like soft drinks, juice, candy or desserts. If your child's guide finds that your child doesn't eat their lunch or is still hungry afterward, they will let you know that your child needs more/different foods.

A healthy morning and afternoon snack is prepared by our staff. Each classroom's snack log is posted outside their door. Snacks are made available in the morning and afternoon and children are taught how to serve themselves and eat at the snack table in their classroom.

Please notify us if your child has an allergy. In addition, your lead guide will notify you if there is an allergy in the classroom severe enough that the food cannot be brought into the classroom.

## Naptime

Each child is given a cot and a fitted sheet that is laundered on Fridays. Families provide a blanket, small pillow, and stuffed animal if desired. Each child has a cubby where their nap gear is stored for the week, and gear is sent home on Fridays to be laundered. Our nap rooms have blackout shades and sound machines to create calm, quiet sleeping conditions.

When a child is transitioning away from needing a daily nap, JMS will work with the family to support the transition. This might mean offering a child a shortened nap, or napping only on certain days of the week, until the child is entirely done napping.

## Outdoor Time

During outdoor time, children play freely in our outdoor environment under staff supervision. Children might get muddy, wet, or dirty. It is important that families send children to school with the proper gear to play comfortably outside for at least one hour each day. We go outside every day rain or shine, except for rare occasions when the rain or wind are so severe as to be unsafe.

## Field Trips and Walks

Our excellent location means that we go on walks and adventures frequently, especially when the weather is nice! JMS is licensed to take children on walks to Sandy Beach and Treadwell Trail without special parent/guardian approval. On walks our staff maintain licensing-required ratios of adults to children (1:6 for YCC and 1:10 for primary children) and bring an emergency backpack containing a first aid kit. Prior to leaving the building they file a plan of action and attendance list with the main office.

If a child should go missing on a walk, JMS staff will gather all children and call the JMS office. The staff will stay at the location until the Executive Director or the Administrator Designee arrives, then they will take the rest of the children back to JMS. The Executive Director or Administrator Designee will call the parents/guardians and local emergency responders while continuing to search for the child.

## Communication Between Parents/Guardians and Staff

### *Daily Communication*

A healthy working relationship between the family and the guide is critical! Your guides welcome the opportunity to share about your child with you. If you have a question, please email or Brightwheel message your guide. If you need to discuss something sensitive, avoid doing so within earshot of others (children or adults) to maintain respect and confidentiality in our community. Messages on Brightwheel are visible to your child's classroom staff and the administrative team, never other parents/guardians.

Your lead guide will sometimes send home messages or pictures from your child's day, but you will not receive daily updates. Our staff are focused on working with the children and do not have the time in their day to send home daily updates for all the children in their classroom. You will receive an orientation letter from your guide with details about their

classroom expectations and how to communicate with them. Each guide sends home a regular newsletter, holds parent/teacher conferences twice a year, and is available to meet at your request.

You will likely find that your child also develops close relationships with the classroom assistants, who are great resources for questions about the daily schedule, accidents, naps, your child's belongings, etc. Our assistants (there are two in every classroom) would be happy to answer these questions. Please save questions about your child's development for the guide, as they are fully trained.

Our administrative team, including the Executive Director, is your next circle of support. You may get in touch with the Executive Director by emailing, calling, or messaging "Admin" on Brightwheel. If you have an ongoing issue that is not being resolved after bringing it to the attention of your lead guide, please contact the Executive Director.

### *Parent/Teacher Conferences*

Twice a year, we have parent/teacher conferences. You will have a choice for Zoom or an in-person meeting. Your guide will prepare a thorough report of your child's academic and social development and you will have an opportunity to talk through their observations with them and ask any of your own questions. You will be asked to sign up for a conference time slot in advance, and childcare is provided should you need it during your conference.

## Birthdays

As a parent/guardian or family member, you are welcome to come participate in your child's birthday celebration at school. Birthday celebrations usually occur right before lunch and last about 15 minutes. You can bring in a healthy snack or special treat for the class: low-sugar options like muffins, fruit, or other whole-food treats are ideal. You can also bring photographs of your child at different ages to share with his or her classmates. Contact your child's lead guide to arrange a time to come celebrate!

## SECTION 8: Health and Safety

### Illness

If your child is visibly ill with an upset stomach, fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough, diarrhea, or is crankier or more tired than usual, **please keep them home for at least 24 hours after symptoms subside**. We know it is difficult to stay home with a sick child, but it is imperative in keeping our community healthy. If too many of our staff become ill at once, we may need to temporarily close one or more classrooms. Please notify us if your child is sick and will be staying home.

If your child becomes sick while at school, we will call you to ask that you come pick them up. If you do not answer calls/messages and the child is still at school after 1 hour, we will begin calling emergency contacts. Unfortunately we do not have the staffing to keep a child indoors during outdoor time or otherwise excuse children from activities due to illness.

**Returning to school after illness:**

Colds	No cloudy discharge/no persistent coughs or sneezes.
Flu	Absence of fever, chills, cold symptoms, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, aches for 24 hours.
Fevers	When fever has subsided for 24 hours without the use of medication.
Strep	24 hours after medication is given if no fever is present.
Covid	24 hours without fever and other symptoms have subsided.
Pink Eye	24 hours after medication is STARTED.
Chicken Pox/Shingles	All pox are completely scabbed over and not weeping.
Hand, Foot, and Mouth	All blisters must be dried and not weeping, no fever.
Impetigo	24 hours after medication is STARTED.
Head Lice	After the first treatment. Check for nits and retreat after 10 days.
Scabies	24 hours after medication. Must be reshampooed 10 days after first shampooed.
Ringworm	24 hours after medication is STARTED.
Giardia	Doctor's written release. Absence of vomiting.
Hepatitis	Doctor's written release.
Meningitis	Doctor's written release.
Vomiting	24 hours without vomiting.

**Medication**

Prescription and over-the-counter medication must be given to JMS in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's full name and birth date. Medication should be accompanied by a signed medical authorization form. Prescription medication will only be given if it cannot be given at home. Over-the-counter medication will only be given in

special circumstances, when accompanied by a doctor's note that has a beginning and end date and the dosing information. All medication and the completed JMS approved authorization form should be delivered by the parents/guardians to the office so that JMS can determine who will administer the medication.

## Incidents and Accidents

It is developmentally appropriate for children to move and explore, and they occasionally hurt themselves while at school. Most injuries consist of minor scrapes and bruises. Our staff are trained to administer first aid when such accidents occur. If an injury occurs, the staff member present for the incident will write an incident report detailing what led to the incident, what happened, what injuries were caused if any, and how staff responded. Incident reports are signed by the staff member writing the report and a lead guide or administrator and placed in the child's file located outside the classroom. One copy of the incident report is retained for JMS records. Staff may send a Brightwheel message or make a call home to let parents/guardians know that an incident report is coming home. Parents/guardians will also receive an incident report in the event that a child injures or is injured by another child.

In the event of accidents that require medical attention but are not life threatening, the parents/guardians will be advised immediately and staff may transport the child to the doctor's office or medical service of the parent's/guardian'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'/guardians' expense) for further medical attention. Parents/guardians or an emergency contact person will be notified immediately.

## Security

The security of our building is a high priority, and therefore our doors lock automatically and key fobs are needed to enter the building. All staff members have key fobs to enter the building. If a parent/guardian or approved pickup needs to enter the building during the day, they need to call the office at 907-364-3535 to be buzzed in. If nobody is able to answer the office phone, the parent/guardian should send a message on Brightwheel. JMS has three surveillance cameras located outside.

We train our staff on evacuation and safety management. We practice fire drills on a monthly basis so that children know how to evacuate the building safely and efficiently.

## Emergency Response Plan

In the event of an emergency, Brightwheel will be the first method JMS uses to contact families. If evacuation of the building is necessary, JMS's meeting location is the Fish & Game building (802 3rd Street).

## Harassment

JMS is committed to providing an environment that ensures all people are treated with respect and dignity. Accordingly, we do not tolerate harassment, defined as verbal or physical aggression towards any individual. If you have an uncomfortable interaction with

someone on site, please try to handle it with respect and dignity with the person involved. If you cannot handle it, please bring it to the Executive Director.

## Weapons

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

## Drugs and Alcohol

Smoking, vaping, drugs and alcohol are prohibited on school grounds.

## Animals

Sometimes we keep small pets in the classroom in adherence with Child Care Program Office licensing regulations. JMS staff will ensure appropriate safety measures at all times, as well as proper handwashing procedures after handling any animals. JMS staff will at times allow supervised interactions between their pets and the children when appropriate. Families will be notified when a pet enters the classroom.

## 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 in areas inaccessible to children.

## Confidentiality

We work hard to maintain the confidentiality of our children and families. Records and information pertaining to an individual child or the parents/guardians 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.

If you need to discuss something sensitive, avoid doing so within earshot of others (children or adults) to maintain respect and confidentiality for children, families and staff.

Parents/guardians 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.

## Release of Students

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

## Child Abuse and Neglect

The staff at JMS are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect. In cases of suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect, staff are required to report it to the Office of Children's Services.

Office of Children's Services  
9107 Mendenhall Mall Rd #300  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-1650

## Custody Issues

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

- The parents/guardians who register(s) a child are financially responsible for all tuition.
- Only persons listed on the emergency card will be allowed to pick up children. If one parent/guardian 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/guardians.* JMS will not be responsible for keeping track of parents/guardians' schedules. Please keep us informed about drop-off and pick up schedules, phone numbers, etc. It is our preference to communicate with both parents/guardians at the same time whenever possible (e.g. on Brightwheel, at conferences) to avoid misunderstandings.

## Late Child Pickup Procedure

If there is a delay or emergency preventing you from picking up your child on time, please contact JMS via Brightwheel or by calling the office at 907-364-3535. In the event a child has not been picked up by closing time, staff will follow the procedure listed below:

1. Remain at the school with the child.
2. Try to contact parents/guardians using phone numbers listed on the emergency card and Brightwheel. If unable to contact them, then go to #3.
3. 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.
4. Call the Executive Director. Whenever possible, the Executive Director will return to the school to remain with the child.
5. 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/guardians can be located. The JMS representative will leave a note on the outside door of the school for the parents/guardians 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.

## SECTION 9: Managing Children's Behaviors

### Meeting the Needs of Children and Parents/Guardians

Here at JMS we support the entire family. We strive to include families in all areas of our school and help connect relationships between the child, parents/guardians, caregivers and our school. The idea of creating whole child relationships must be understood and shared by all members of the staff.

We approach each child as an individual and recognize that each child has his/her own strengths and needs. Each staff member must be aware of and responsive to each individual child. No two children are alike; we need to plan and provide appropriate activities that meet each child's needs at their developmental stage in life.

A happy and satisfied child and family is our goal and the key to our success here at JMS. We are the custodians of the children's safety and well-being while they are in our care, and we work to nurture their development, self-esteem, and self-confidence during their time with us.

### Guiding Children's Behavior

The expectation is that JMS staff use positive, respectful language to support children's behavior and help them understand what is expected of them. Adults are expected to model the behavior they want to see: that means speaking quietly, moving slowly, handling materials with care, and treating others with respect and courtesy. We guide all staff to use care in communicating with one another and with families as well as with our children. We need to watch our tone of voice, our words, and our message. Specific information about students is considered confidential and shared as privately as possible. When children see adults practicing grace and courtesy in front of them and trying to solve problems in a respectful manner, they learn how they can engage with one another, how to handle mistakes and frustrations, and it helps them to feel safe with us and each other. Our guidance helps children develop social competence and practicing grace and courtesy helps to create a classroom and building culture that is the cornerstone of a Montessori environment.

#### *Redirection*

As much as possible we try to solve all behavior issues within the classroom community through the use of grace and courtesy lessons, teachable moments, and techniques of conflict resolution. When a child feels good about themselves and others, very few corrective measures need to be taken. However, there are some cases when a child's behaviors require direct intervention. When necessary the adult(s) in the environment will use the following sequence of 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. As soon as the child is ready, there will be a gentle discussion about appropriate behavior and how to handle the situation in the future.

### *Handling Aggression*

If a child hurts someone or something, our approach is to stop the behavior, help the child calm down, then ask them what occurred. We give the child a chance to explain their behavior, then explain why their behavior was harmful and what they should do instead. During this conversation, we show absolute respect for the child and trust in their ability to learn rather than use shame and punishment. We check to make sure that the child's basic needs are being met. Is the child hungry? Tired? Overstimulated? If the child continues to be aggressive, as a last resort we will gently and respectfully remove them from the situation to calm down for no more than ten minutes in a quiet corner of the classroom, the hallway or the office.

We believe that misbehavior is a mistake, not a willful decision. It is an opportunity for us to teach a child appropriate behavior that might also get their needs met. For instance, if a child wants a toy they need to learn how to ask; they need to learn to wait their turn; often they need a chance to relax and simply watch others. Punishment has been shown to be ineffective at teaching behaviors; instead we give feedback and encouragement.

## Procedure for Handling Ongoing Behavioral Issues

### *Documentation of Behavior through Incident Reports*

In addition to injuries and accidents, incident reports are used to document inappropriate behavior or physical aggression. The staff member present will fill out the report to document what led to the behavior, what happened, any injuries or damage that occurred as a result (if any), and how staff responded. If another child is involved, a report is written for that child as well while maintaining confidentiality of each child. Each incident report must also be signed by a lead guide, the Executive Director, or the Administrator Designee and one copy is retained for JMS records. The lead guide or administrator will notify the parents/guardians of the behavior via Brightwheel or phone call.

When a lead guide notices a pattern of difficult behavior, they will notify the parents/guardians promptly and collaborate with them to identify possible causes and solutions. Incident reports should be looked at with the parent/guardian to identify behavior patterns and possible solutions.

### *Development of Behavior Plans*

It is the policy of JMS to work with the family and other available resources to meet the needs of each child enrolled in the program. When the lead guide determines a child is exhibiting a documented pattern of inappropriate behavior that is disruptive or places the child or others at risk, the lead guide will initiate an in-person meeting with the child's

parents/guardians and the Executive Director or her representative to determine the cause of the behaviors and develop a behavior plan. In addition to its internal resources, JMS may utilize or refer families to external resources such as REACH, the Juneau School District, Southeast Childhood Collective, Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, and other community services. The behavior plan will be in writing and signed by the Executive Director or her representative, the lead guide and the parents/guardians. The parents/guardians will receive a copy of the behavior plan and a copy will be retained by JMS. Every effort will be made to implement the plan with consistency and integrity. The parents/guardians, lead guide, and Executive Director will continue to meet and update the behavior plan as needed according to the changing needs of the child.

### *Removal of a Child from JMS*

If a behavior plan has been developed and every effort has been made to implement it accurately, but the child's behaviors continue to disrupt classroom function or pose a threat to himself or others, the lead guide, the Executive Director, and the parents/guardians will meet and try to come to a decision together about whether the child should continue to attend JMS. If JMS believes that removing the child is the only remaining viable option, they will share documentation of all actions taken to help the child and their reasoning why they feel they cannot meet the needs of the child. Lastly, if JMS and the parents/guardians cannot come to a mutually agreeable decision, JMS can invite an educational/therapeutic interventionist to observe the child and make recommendations. JMS reserves the right to make a final determination to remove a child. If JMS is unable to meet the needs of the child, then the parents/guardians will be responsible for finding alternative care for his/her child.

## Children With Special Needs

If your child has a disability or special need, please communicate it with the Executive Director prior to enrollment. As a small school with limited staffing, we lack the resources to serve all children with special needs. Before enrolling your child, we will assess whether our program will meet your child's needs and that we are able to serve them.

If during your child's enrollment at JMS your lead guide notices a possible undiagnosed need, they will reach out to you to have a conversation. They may suggest that your child be observed by a psychologist or specialist to help the school and your family better understand your child's needs. If needs are diagnosed by a professional, the Juneau Montessori School may require 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 needs. We may ask that the parents/guardians also meet with the lead guide and Executive Director to determine the appropriateness of continued enrollment at our school. 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.

## SECTION 10: Family Involvement

## Parent/Guardian Volunteers

An engaged parent/guardian community is vital to a healthy school. **The expectation when you enroll at JMS is that you participate in our community on a monthly basis by: volunteering on the playground, helping with fundraisers, attending parent/family nights, sharing a skill with your child's class, taking care of school pets, or contributing needed materials to a classroom.** Some classrooms need certain items on a weekly basis, like flowers for flower arranging, tissues, etc. Some classrooms have pets that need care on weekends and over breaks. Your lead guide will let you know what their classroom needs, and sometimes we will send out requests to parents/guardians from the whole school.

## Committees and Board Service

The JMS board has several committees, including finance, fund development, grounds and facilities, and pedagogy and policy. Committees typically meet once a quarter. Reach out to the Executive Director to sign up for a seat on a committee. Board and committee service are excellent ways to stay engaged at our school.

As a parent, you are also welcome to apply to join the Board of Directors. Our board seats up to nine members and meets monthly. Reach out to [board@juneaumontessori.org](mailto:board@juneaumontessori.org) or the Executive Director at [jms@juneaumontessori.org](mailto:jms@juneaumontessori.org) to obtain an application or learn more.

## SECTION 11: Grievance Policy

It is our culture at Juneau Montessori School to try to solve issues directly with each other as much as possible. If you have an issue with somebody at the school, first approach the person directly to try to solve the issue together. Assume that the other person is behaving with the best intent and bring a solution-oriented mindset. If the issue is not resolved, bring your concern to the attention of the Executive Director, who will try to help you solve the problem or mediate a conversation. If the issue is still not resolved or you feel you have been treated unfairly, then follow the grievance procedure outlined below.

1. Bring your grievance to the Board of Directors or the Board President in writing. (As you formulate your grievance, be prepared to answer the questions listed in #3.)
2. After receiving your grievance, the Board of Directors will send it to the Grievance Committee, composed of at least one Lead Guide, one representative from the Pedagogy and Policy Committee, a parent and a board member. (See JMS Bylaws §8.07.) The Executive Director will participate in the committee if the grievance is not against the Executive Director. If any member of the committee has a conflict of interest, they will recuse themselves and the committee will seek a replacement. The members of the Grievance Committee will sign a confidentiality agreement.
3. The Grievance Committee will ask you to complete an intake form with the following questions:
  - a. State your grievance, including relevant dates, in detail:
  - b. Identify other people who have personal knowledge, observance, or evidence of this act (if applicable):
  - c. What previous attempts have been made to resolve this situation?

- d. Describe the remedy or solution you seek.
4. The Grievance Committee will work to come up with a solution. They might ask to meet with you, interview other parties, or conduct an investigation as they attempt to come up with a solution.
  5. Within 20 days of receiving the grievance, the Grievance Committee will send a recommendation to the Board of Directors, unless further time is needed to investigate, mediate or resolve the grievance. The Board of Directors will review the recommendation during their next regularly scheduled meeting during an executive session. The Board of Directors will make a decision that will be considered final.
  6. If the grievance is about the removal of a child from JMS, the child shall not attend JMS during the grievance process.
  7. JMS will follow the Grievance Policies listed in JMS Bylaws §8.07.

**I have read and understand the policies outlined in the JMS Family Handbook:**

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**Name**

**Signature**

**Date**

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**Name**

**Signature**

**Date**