



## Parent Handbook

Beverly Montessori School  
9916 S. Walden Parkway  
Chicago, IL 60643  
773-239-7635  
[www.beverlymontessori.org](http://www.beverlymontessori.org)

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***Beverly Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender orientation, socio-economic level, physical ability, learning style, and/or genetic information in the administration of its educational admission and hiring policies.***

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## **Welcome!**

We welcome you and your child to Beverly Montessori School! We are very excited you have chosen our school for your child. We believe that as parents you make up one-third of the educational triangle: teachers, students, and parents. Therefore, we want you to be a part of the Montessori experience as much as possible. This handbook is intended to help you thoroughly understand our policies and procedures and how our school operates. Please take the time to read through the information, so that you can be comfortable with the workings of our school.

Beverly Montessori School is a neighborhood school that has been serving the community for 55 years. We follow the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, who held a deep respect for the child and the adult to be. Our school provides a nurturing environment in which wonder, joy, and love of learning are encouraged. Children interact with each other in their environment to develop physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and intellectually.

Our school opened its doors in September 1967, at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 9401 South Oakley, with an enrollment of 50 children. Five couples -- Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Barry, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Burke, Mr. and Mrs. John Coffey, Mr. and Mrs. Brian Foley, and Mr. and Mrs. John Geary, founded the school. Mrs. Stase Vaisvila worked with the five couples in establishing our excellent school and served as its Head of School for 20 years. Because of the increased demand for Montessori education throughout the area, the School Board found it necessary to look for larger quarters. In the spring of 1969, the school purchased the building at its present site.

In November of 2010, the founding Board Members passed on their legacy and responsibilities to the new professional School Board: Susan and Brian Coffey, Chrissa Barry Dolan, Kristina Geary Meehan, Bill McMahon, and Rebecca Burton Range. In March of 2023, Kristina Geary Meehan and Bill McMahon stepped down and we welcomed new Board Members Siobhan Conroy, Karen Moran and Thomas Ruggiere. Mrs. Virginia Maciulus served as the Head of School from 1987-2012 and Mrs. Linda Budewitz was the interim Head of School from 2012-2014.

Mrs. Kelley Ciraulo has been Head of School since 2014. She is a proud graduate of the Beverly Montessori class of 1985 and feels very fortunate to be part of the Montessori family again. She has been involved locally in private and public education both as a teacher and in administrative roles for over 20 years, and has worked with children of all different ages. She has a B.S. in Elementary Education and an M.A. in Educational Leadership and is certified in Montessori leadership. She has a strong passion for teaching and education and is so glad to bring her expertise and experience to this leadership role.

## **General Information**

### ***Mission Statement***

Beverly Montessori School encourages a lifelong love of learning with a deep respect for each child.

### ***Vision***

We strive to provide an inclusive welcoming school community that provides authentic and developmentally appropriate Montessori early childhood learning. We value the human spirit and the development of the whole child. It is our aim to partner with parents, to guide children to be peacemakers and citizens of the global community.

### ***Philosophy***

Our educational philosophy is based on the research of Maria Montessori, who founded the first Montessori school in Rome in 1907. Dr. Montessori believed that the goal of the educational process was to cultivate a child's natural desire to learn. Our method of education is a child-centered approach. It is a view of the child as one who is naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared learning environment. Our teachers carefully prepare their environments with Montessori materials presented in an orderly way.

Montessori education is a developmental approach based on Dr. Maria Montessori's scientific observations of children, specially designed materials, and an environment created to maximize each child's learning potential. We implement a child-centered curriculum that is not time restricted or competitive. Students in mixed-age groupings learn at their own pace through their own discovery and experience. Children are directed individually instead of as a group. They work independently, are self-motivated, and correct themselves through control of error. At Beverly Montessori School, we believe that all children deserve trust and respect and that all children can learn.

To assist the child in their natural development our programs offer well-maintained, orderly "prepared environments" which invite a child to move and investigate. The child has free choice in the selection and length of tasks, which are structured for independent and successful activity. The Montessori materials are designed to isolate a single new concept to be grasped by the child and are self-correcting. They also follow a sequential progression permitting the child to master one task and then proceed to a further challenge.

### ***Licensing, Incorporation, Affiliations***

Beverly Montessori School is a private, not-for-profit corporation, classified as 501(c) 3 under the Federal tax code. No single individual or group of individuals own the school or derive any financial profit from the school. All profits generated from the school's activities are reinvested in the school. Our FEIN# is 36-2646764.

Beverly Montessori School is a registered school with the Illinois State Board of Education. We have been affiliated with the American Montessori Society (AMS) for over 40 years as a full-member school and are in the process of becoming an accredited Montessori school through AMS. Requirements necessary for a program to be considered a full-member school of the AMS include mixed-age groupings that foster peer learning, uninterrupted blocks of work time, and guided choice of work activity. In addition, specially designed Montessori learning materials should be meticulously arranged and available for use in an aesthetically pleasing environment. It also requires that the lead teacher in each classroom holds a Montessori credential from an accredited training center. The teachers may also hold individual memberships with the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the North American Montessori Teachers Association. Our school is a member of the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools (AIMS) and serves as a training site for interns from Montessori teacher training centers.

### **Staff Directory**

**773-239-7635**

**Office Hours 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m.**

Kelley Ciraulo, Head of School.....	kciraulo@beverlymontessori.org
Rachael Hernandez, Business Manager.....	rhernandez@beverlymontessori.org
Allison Potter, Fireplace Room Directress .....	apotter@beverlymontessori.org
Karen Quiroz, Southwest Room Directress (morning) .....	kquiroz@beverlymontessori.org
Nancy Schwartz, Southwest Room Directress (afternoon) .....	nschwartz@beverlymontessori.org
Kaushika Shanbhag, East Room Directress.....	kshanbhag@beverlymontessori.org

## Programs

Our programs focus on the development of the whole child -- physical, spiritual, social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Daily observation of children by teachers is a vital feature of our classrooms. Development of social skills, physical skills, academics and character development are noted. We hope to foster a **positive attitude toward learning** by providing a variety of interesting activities that challenge and pique the young child's curiosity and intellect. A child's **self-esteem** is being supported by his success with the materials and encouragement by peers and staff. With progress toward more challenging activities, a child's **concentration** span increases and he/she is able to focus on a chosen task for a longer time and with more depth. A child is encouraged to choose activities **independently** according to his interests. **Cooperative learning** is encouraged in our mixed-age groups with children working together on various projects. **Respect** for others and the classroom, as a place of learning, is our basic ground rule.

Montessori programs are based on planes of development. Our programs implement a unique three-year cycle of learning geared to the child's most sensitive years. Children who are three, four, five and six years of age interact and learn together in their classroom environment. Older children model activities and behavior which younger children observe and internalize. Children allowed to experience this cycle in a prepared Montessori environment have a sense of mastery which enhances their self-confidence, encourages further exploration of the child's interests, and fosters their desire to assist other children.

Our policy is that once a child is enrolled in a class, we do not change the child to another classroom or session. This familiarity, stability and continuity in the child's environment support the young child's development.

### ***Five-Day Preschool and Kindergarten Half-Day Program***

The five-day program is the foundation of Montessori education for children three years of age by September 1st through kindergarten. It provides continuity and routine for young children and the security of belonging to their own stable community. Children can attend either the morning 3-hour session or the afternoon 3-hour session. The child would stay within this classroom community from ages 3 through 6 years old. According to the School Code for the State of Illinois, a child who is five years old by September 1st is considered a kindergartner. Beverly Montessori will consider children who are 5 by September 30th, have attended our program for 2 full years, and who have been determined "ready" as potential candidates for the kindergarten program. Kindergarten children may attend either the half- or full-day program. **We do not accept new children to our school just for the kindergarten year.**

### ***Three-Day Preschool Half-Day Program***

This program is for children who are between the ages of 3 and 3 ½ years by September 1st. It provides an initial exposure to school (3 hours a day), other children and adults, but offers an option for parents who hesitate to send younger children to school for 5 days.

### ***Full-Day Preschool Program***

The full-day preschool program is for 3 and 4-year old children who would like an all-day Montessori experience. The program runs five days a week. In the full-day preschool program, children have their uninterrupted work time, lunch, rest (if needed), and outdoor learning.

### ***Full-Day Kindergarten Program***

Full-day kindergarten children experience the full-day program's activities with the addition of enrichment lessons in the following areas: literature, Chinese culture and language, mathematics, science, and fine arts.

At the end of the child's three-year cycle (at the end of the kindergarten year) the directress submits a report to the child's parents. Parents may give this report to the child's next school or teacher.

***According to the School Code for the State of Illinois, a child who is five years old by September 1st is considered a kindergartner. Beverly Montessori will consider children who are 5 by September 30th, have attended our program for 2 full years, and who have been determined "ready" as potential candidates for the kindergarten program. A meeting must take place to discuss eligibility. We do not accept children to our school just for the kindergarten year.***

## Policies and Procedures

### **Admissions**

Children are admitted without regard to race, creed, ethnic background, or gender orientation. Considerations are given to the needs of each classroom, so we may balance ages and/or gender in admitting children. Current students, siblings of current students, families who have attended our school in the past, and transfers from other Montessori schools are given priority in registration. **We do not accept new children to our school just for the kindergarten year.**

Our school includes children with special needs. Acceptance may be on a trial basis, as agreed upon with the parents. At the end of the period, the Head of School and the teacher will determine if the student's needs will be met by the program. If it is determined that the child and/or Beverly Montessori School will not benefit from continued involvement, a conference will be scheduled between parents or legal guardians, the teacher and the Head of School.

Families will need to submit a copy of their child's birth certificate that will remain on file at the school.

### **Assessing Progress**

Children are observed in their daily activities in the classrooms by the staff. These observations are discussed in regards to each individual child's progress in emotional, social, physical and cognitive development with the classroom team of teachers. An on-line record keeping system called Transparent Classroom is used in each classroom. There is a parent portal to this program. Goals are set for each child in all the areas of development. Parents are encouraged to observe their children's classroom at least once a year. (Parent observations were paused during the pandemic due to COVID-19 protocols, but are resuming now). This helps both parents and teacher to have a common base for assessment during conferences.

Transparent Classroom is an online record keeping system our teachers use to monitor and track progress for each child. Reports, documents and photographs are used to track this progress. There is a parent portal to this program, so that parents have access to their child's information. All information is private and parents will need to create a login and password. Parents can also share their own personal information to create a classroom directory for all parents in their child's classroom. Please know that this information is for building relationships for children outside of school. **No parent, nor the school, is allowed to use the directory for solicitation purposes of any kind.**

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

For the safety and well-being of the children, we have developed the following arrival and dismissal procedures. Please refrain from using your cell phone during arrival and dismissal. Your child and our staff deserve your undivided attention. To maintain the flow of traffic, please move ahead promptly when waiting in line to drop-off or pick-up your child and pull up as far forward as possible. **We need to respect our neighboring businesses and community. While waiting in the carpool lane or on Walden Pkwy, please remember to keep alleys, driveways and intersections clear.**

**ARRIVAL:** During your child's arrival time, cars line up along the curb on Walden Pkwy in front of the school. Please do not line up in the carpool line any earlier than 5 minutes before your child's scheduled drop-off time, as we have staggered drop-off times and staffing considerations to manage. Additionally Walden Pkwy gets very congested and we have neighboring businesses and safety to consider. Drivers are asked to stay in their cars while in the carpool lane. Please "hug" the curb to allow space for cars driving down Walden Pkwy to pass through the center. Please have your child unbuckled and ready to go with their items when it is your turn. A staff member will then open child's car door and help your child out of the car and into the school. Please do not send your child out of the car on their own unless your car is directly in front of the school and you are signaled by staff. Drivers, please wait until children are safely away from the car before pulling away from the sidewalk. For safety reasons, we remind drivers to stay in their cars and to check traffic before pulling away from the curb.

**DISMISSAL:** Please do not arrive to the carpool line for dismissal any earlier than 5 minutes before or later than 5 minutes after your child's scheduled pick-up time, as we have staggered dismissal times and staffing considerations to manage. Additionally, Walden Pkwy gets very congested and we have neighboring businesses and safety to consider. During dismissal, cars again line up along the curb in front of the school. Please "hug" the curb to allow space for cars driving down Walden Pkwy to pass through the center. Each car should display the carpool number assigned to them. *Make sure that the carpool number can be seen clearly by the dismissal staff and is not hidden by tinted windshield glass or visors and that it remains visible until your child is in the car.* Please display the carpool number for the entire school year, even if the staff knows your car. For dismissal, children remain in their classrooms until their carpool number is displayed to them by the school staff. For safety reasons, the children are released to one or two cars at a time. For expediency and safety, we ask that drivers stay in their cars. Staff will assist your child into the car and close the door. The driver should then pull ahead to fasten the child in their car seat or booster, allowing the next car in line to receive their child. Staff is not allowed to fasten your child's seat belt.

When pulling ahead, please remember to keep alleys, driveways and intersections clear and to be careful of traffic. Note that the area just south of the carpool lane is a busy driveway to the auto-shop. Please do not stop there to buckle your child.

The office staff must be notified in writing (email) before releasing your child to an unfamiliar car or driver. Please inform any new caregiver of our arrival and dismissal procedures.

Beverly Montessori School understands that on occasion, circumstances occur that lead to a late pick-up of your child. Late pick-ups negatively affect the flow of the schedule for staff and students and we appreciate every effort you make for timely pick-ups. Please contact the school by phone if you know you will be late picking up your child. A fee of \$25.00 will be applied for the fourth late-pick-up occurrence, when a child is picked up 10 minutes after their scheduled dismissal time. A fee of \$50.00 will be applied for each late-pick-up occurrence after the fourth, when a child is picked up 10 minutes after their scheduled dismissal time. This will be added to your FACTS account.

### ***Birthdays***

Children's birthdays are celebrated at "line time." The celebration might consist of a birthday song, a story of the child's life, or the serving of a snack. We ask that parents NOT send gifts or party invitations to school. These situations can be upsetting for children who are not invited and can be disruptive to the learning environment. Instead, please mail or email invitations and arrange for weekend parties. Below are suggestions for ways to celebrate your child's birthday at school.

- A favorite book or CD or other educational item may be donated to the class. We will inscribe it with your child's name and date. You can call your child's directress for specific suggestions.
- A favorite/special book or CD or other educational item to share with the class that day and bring home afterward.
- A healthy snack to share -- Our school has a **NO CANDY policy** and all candy will be sent home.
- Non-edible "goodie bag" items such as pencils, erasers, or stickers -- Each child should be able to take one home at dismissal. Please remember to check your child's classroom list so that each child can receive one. And be aware of any items that may be mistaken as food (i.e. tiny erasers may not be a good idea).

### ***Bullying Policy***

As adults who care for young children, we like to identify behaviors before they become problematic. Bullying is defined as the repeated physical and/or psychological intimidation of another creating a pattern of harassments and abuse, and intentional meanness. Typical behaviors for children in our age group include: laughing when someone gets hurt, calling someone names, excluding a child from play or social situations on a consistent basis, joining a collective of criticism or meanness, or making fun of differences.

Our philosophy of discipline is one of positive reinforcement and redirection. The atmosphere in the Montessori environment is one of order and respect for all people and things. The classroom is a small society that encourages self-control and responsibility for one's own actions. The one all-inclusive ground rule is respect. Teachers work with all the students to solve conflicts peacefully. They set clear limits, taking care not to overreact.

In the event the children are behaving in a way, which may be harmful to themselves or to others, our policy is that:

- The nearest adult may hold the child's hands and say, "here, no one hits" and stays with the child.
- They may remove the child from the situation if necessary, and stay with them. The teacher gathers information from all involved, including the bystanders. A cooling-off period will be provided for the child.
- The teachers will not respond to the child in a hostile manner. They will be consistent in their response and language. Children will receive lots of reassurance and encouragement.
- Teachers will increase supervision in "hot spots." *Teachers and adults provide a model of controlling their emotions (temper, frustration, etc.) and being respectful, kind and courteous to others. They encourage positive actions and socialization by providing opportunities for kindness and ways to be helpful.*
- Head of School is notified of the situation.
- Head of School and staff member involved will look into situation and reach out to parents no later than 10 days after the incident.
- Any student who reports incidents or more information on what occurred will be protected and confidentiality will be maintained.
- No family, student, or staff member will be allowed to retaliate on anyone who reports an act of bullying.
- All parents of students involved will be notified of the situation.

In the event that a child is consistently behaving in a way which may be harmful to himself or to others, parents will be required to come into the school. A specific plan of logical/natural consequences will be developed and discussed with the parents and staff. This written action plan will be signed by all team members. Resources will be provided to the family such as counseling, support services and other available resources which can include: social work, social emotional learning with student support consultant, and/or consultant from Illinois Act for Children.

### ***Carpools***

Please be sure to inform the school of carpool arrangements you have for either drop-off or pick-up. To facilitate pick-up procedures, each family will have a carpool number. All drivers should have the carpool numbers of each child displayed on the days they are picking up multiple children.

### ***Clothing***

Simple, washable, sturdy and easy-to-manage clothes are appropriate for school. Children should be able to manage their clothes when going to the bathroom. Please do not send children to school in clothing that may become a distraction in the classroom (costumes, sweatshirts with masks or large decorations, clothing with large characters, capes, etc.). Please make sure that buttons are big, zippers are in working order, and that your child is not encumbered with bodysuits, overalls, leotards, rompers, tight-fitting pants, belt buckles or snaps that they cannot manage. Independence is an important goal for your child. We need to help them achieve this. All sweaters, coats, hats, mittens, shoes should be labeled with your child's name or initials. Please make sure that these are also manageable for children.

Each child is required to have a complete change of clothing at school, including underwear, shirts, pants and socks. Children also need a pair of simple slippers (no characters) or clean easy to manage gym shoes to be kept and worn at school. The clothing should be packed in a shoebox-sized container with the child's name clearly displayed on both ends and brought to school the first day. In the case of an accident, the wet or dirty clothes will be sent home with a note. We ask that you replenish these items for your child's extra clothes box on the next school day and return any BMS clothes after washing.

Please do not send your child to school with a backpack. We do not have the storage space to accommodate backpacks. While most communication is done by email, any notes that are sent home are pinned to your child. This assures us that you receive them. You can also pin any notes to your child that you send to school or you can hand them to the person greeting your child in the carpool line. This allows your child to be as hands-free as possible. A BMS tote bag will be used to transport your child's papers that he/she produces in the classroom (roughly at the end of each month). This tote bag to be returned to school the next school day, where it will be stored until the next time work is sent home. Students are provided one BMS tote bag for the duration of their time at our school, and may keep it after leaving our school. If a tote bag is lost or not returned after being sent home, work will be sent home in a disposable plastic bag.

### ***Communication/Grievance Policy***

Most of our communication from the office is through email. Weekly reminders are sent home via email. Please let us know if email is not convenient for you.

Parents should contact their child's Directress when questions/concerns arise about the classroom or their child. They can be reached by phone or email. Their preference of times they can be reached, or if prefer phone or email will be communicated to you in the beginning of the school year. Please note that Directresses are not able to communicate during class time and therefore will not respond immediately, so for immediate attention please call or email the office staff.

If any discussion with the Directress does not resolve a matter, please address the Head of School with specific details. Upon receipt of the issue, the Head of School will investigate and respond.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the problem by the Head of School, they may appeal to the Board of Directors in writing. The Board will then conduct its own investigation and submit their final decision in writing to the complainant.

Please notify the office by email or phone immediately:

- if there is a change in address or home, cell or work phone numbers,
- if there is a change in who will be picking up the child from school,
- if there is a change in the family that would affect your child,
- if your child has a cold or a contagious illness,
- if your child is absent

### ***Conferences***

Formal parent teacher conferences are held once a year. There are several other meetings planned for parents throughout the school year. These mandatory meetings provide the opportunity to familiarize you with Montessori education, the faculty and other parents. Meetings are for adults only. Meetings are noted on the school calendar.

All parents are expected to attend conferences to discuss their child's progress. Conferences are scheduled in November for all new students. Conferences for children returning for their second or third year are held in January. An optional second conference is held in April. In addition to these, conferences may be held at any time at the request of either parents or the Directress.



### **Confidentiality**

Information of confidential nature is imparted ONLY to persons with an absolute need to know. This is in regards to all communication between parents and staff. Parents should immediately notify the Head of School with information that may severely affect their child's development. The Head of School and parents of the child shall decide who needs to know the imparted knowledge. **Staff members will not discuss information about other children with parents or families, except for information about their own child.** The faculty of our school honors confidentiality of student records. Written information is released about your child only with written consent from a parent. You may request to review your child's records and comment on this information. We are required to maintain records of previously enrolled children for five years after the child has been discharged from our school.

### **Discipline at Home**

The development of self-discipline is our aim in the Montessori school. We are concerned with helping each individual reach their full potential as a person within their community. We foster this inner discipline by organizing our classroom environments in an orderly, logical and attractive manner. This encourages children and adults to respect the classroom as a place of learning. Children choose work without interference from others. This approach alleviates many situations requiring adult intervention. Mixed-age grouping allows children to emulate mature behavior and encourages cooperation and responsibility. People and the classroom environment are respected. Some strategies used are:

- Distracting the child.
- Ignoring the misbehavior when appropriate.
- Structuring the environment.
- Controlling the situation, not the child.
- Involving the child through choices and consequences.
- Planning time for encouragement and positive interactions.
- Letting go and trusting the child will do the "right" thing.
- Increasing consistency with ground rules.
- Noticing positive behavior.
- Excluding the child with a time out (as a last resort).

(From Parenting Young Children: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting of Children Under Six.)

We ask the support of parents in monitoring and limiting your child's viewing of violent movies, programs, and video games, as this behavior is sometimes displayed within the school setting.

### **Discipline at School**

Our philosophy of discipline is one of positive reinforcement and redirection. The atmosphere in the Montessori environment is one of order and respect for people and things. The classroom is a small society that encourages self-control and responsibility for one's own actions. The one all-inclusive ground rule is respect. Teachers work with all the students to solve conflicts peacefully. They set clear limits, taking care not to overreact.

In the event the children are behaving in a way, which may be harmful to themselves or to others, our policy is that:

- The nearest adult may hold the child's hands and say, "Here, no one hits."
- They may remove the child from the situation if necessary, and stay with them. The teacher gathers information from all involved, including the bystanders. A cooling-off period will be provided for the child.
- The teachers will respond to the child in a calm manner. They will be consistent in their response and language. Children will receive lots of reassurance and encouragement. Teachers will increase supervision in "hot spots." *Teachers and adults provide a model of controlling their emotions (temper, frustration, etc.) and being respectful, kind and courteous to others. They encourage positive actions and socialization by providing opportunities for kindness and ways to be helpful.*

### **Early Childhood STEP Training**

A Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) group is offered once a year. This is a voluntary parent study group that meets in an atmosphere of mutual support to discuss child development, discipline and communication strategies.

### **Gifts and Donations**

Our school is a not-for-profit educational corporation. Our financial base is tuition paid by parents. The school also relies on the generosity and support of its parents and the community in fundraising efforts to keep tuition low, and pay school expenses. Generosity of our alumni, current parents and friends in the community is essential to the well-being of our school. Tax deductible contributions are always welcome. Our FEIN# is 36-2646764.

### ***Harvest Fundraising/Tuition Credit Program***

Our school has a year-round fundraising program that sells gift cards for retailers. The Harvest program purchases gift cards at a discount and sells them at face value. The difference provides parents with tuition credit and benefits the school. **Every family is required to purchase enough certificates throughout the school year to earn \$300 worth of credit for the school or to pay \$300 out of pocket if a family chooses not to participate.** Anything earned over the \$300 obligation is credited toward that family's tuition. You can find more information about participation on Transparent Classroom parent portal or you may contact the office for details.

### ***Holidays***

The preparation of the Montessori environment should allow and promote concentration. Young children are sensitive to things that are out of the routine. **We try to keep our holiday celebrations low-key.** Usually, children are doing many things in preparation for holidays at home and need a calm, quiet place where there is a respite from the commercialized celebration of holidays. Instead of celebrating specific holidays, we more typically focus on the seasons. For instance, during the fall and winter we sing songs, read poems, create decorations, experience special foods, and have works related to the fall or winter season. Each classroom will participate according to the interests of the children and the discretion of the individual classroom Directress.

### ***Graduation***

The last day of school is celebrated with entertainment and a special snack. Kindergarten children are considered our graduates and receive ribbons, diplomas, and photographs. In the classroom, each kindergartener is acknowledged and honored with an individual farewell from their classmates. We do host a graduation ceremony with kindergarten families and special guests to help honor their accomplishment.

### ***Jewelry***

Jewelry is a distraction in our classrooms. Please do not send your child with jewelry to school; this includes earrings and watches.

### ***Mandated Reporters***

The Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act , 320 ILCS 325, requires teachers and other school employees who have reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional capacity may be abused or neglected to immediately report that information or cause it to be reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

### ***Non-Discrimination Policy***

It is the policy of the Beverly Montessori School to ensure equal enrollment and employment opportunity without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity or expression, age, ability, or marital status. Beverly Montessori School admits students to all the rights, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We are committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming environment.

### ***Observations***

We encourage parents to observe in the classroom one time per year. (Parent observations were paused during the pandemic due to COVID-19 protocols, but are resuming now). This helps both parents and teacher to have a common base for assessment.

### ***Outdoor activities***

We believe that in order for children to be healthy, they need fresh air and exercise, allowing for big movements. We consider the playground an extension of the classroom. Classrooms go outside whenever possible in the warm and cold weather. We do not use the playground equipment when wet for safety reasons, but the children have other areas to run and play. Be sure your child has appropriate clothes for the weather. Snow pants and snow boots are strongly encouraged during snowy weather and may be kept at school.

### ***Reading table***

The reading table is a great opportunity for the children to get one-on-one time with a parent. During reading table parents sign up to visit the classroom briefly and become a 'choice work' for the children. It is a great way for a parent or caregiver to make a connection with the Montessori classroom and it can be a special time for your child.

### ***Safety***

Fire Drills – We practice fire drills throughout the year so that children and adults are prepared to evacuate the school building in case of an emergency.

Tornado Drill- We practice a tornado/severe weather drill once every school year.

Lockdown Drill- We have a lockdown plan in place in case of an emergency. Please contact the school for more information about our plan.

### ***School Closings***

School will close for extreme weather whenever it would be difficult or dangerous for staff and students to drive to/from school or if the school is not accessible. If parents are uncertain if school is open, they can:

- Check the email you use for school communication – a mass email will be sent out about the closing.
- Sign up to receive text messages through Transparent Classroom. You must include your cell phone number and provider in order to receive group texts from BMS.

### ***Snacks and Lunch***

Beverly Montessori provides snack for the children. Beverly Montessori School encourages healthy eating habits. Snacks should be healthy and nutritious. A snack and material fee of \$50 per student is required for the school year.

Full day children bring their own lunch to our school. Beverly Montessori School encourages healthy eating habits. We ask that your child's lunch include healthy foods – no candy, gum, sugary items, juice, or soda. We also are a peanut/tree nut free school, please do not include any of these items in your child's lunch. We will provide the children with water, cups, silverware, plates and napkins. Children are expected to use appropriate table manners. Children are encouraged to help prepare their own lunches at home.

**NUT FREE SCHOOL** - Over the past several years, we have had more incidences of children who have food allergies. The reaction to nuts can be very severe and life-threatening. To ensure the safety of these children, all snacks and lunch items sent to our school must be peanut and tree nut free. As an added measure of safety for the students who have nut allergies, we are requiring that all snacks be in the original, unopened packaging or have a written confirmation, signed by a parent, stating that the snack has no nuts or nut by-products in them. If there is no written confirmation attached, the food item will not be served.

**No candy or gum is allowed in school for lunch or snack. Both will be sent home.**

### ***Termination of enrollment***

Every effort will be made to avoid terminating a child's enrollment at the school. However, a child's enrollment may be terminated under the following circumstances:

- failure of the parents to cooperate with the school's policies
- failure by the parents to provide health forms and other forms required for enrollment
- failure to pay tuition by the scheduled due date
- inability of the school to meet the apparent needs of the child
- parents' disrespectful behavior toward other parents, children, or staff

If, after admission, it becomes apparent that the program is not appropriate to the needs of the child, a meeting with the parents will be scheduled to notify them of the situation and to explore options. Dismissal will be in writing with specified dates for termination of services and suggestions for alternate placement. Parents are let out of the contract with no refunds for months paid, or at the discretion of the Head of School.

In order to withdraw your child, a written request must be submitted to the school 30 days prior to the withdrawal, stating the reasons for the student's withdrawal and the requested date for withdrawal. Parents will be required to be up-to date on financial obligations up to the end of the 30 days. Parents are released from the contract on the 31<sup>st</sup> day, with no refunds for months paid, or at the discretion of the Head of School.

### ***Transparent Classroom***

Transparent Classroom is an online record keeping system teachers use to monitor and track progress for each child. Reports, documents and photographs are used to track this progress. There is a parent portal to this program, so that parents have access to their child's information. All information is private and parents will need to create a login and password. Parents can also share their own personal information to create a classroom directory for all parents in their child's classroom. Please know that this information is for building relationships for children outside of school and community-building only. **Absolutely, no solicitation of any kind is allowed.**

### ***Technology***

We believe children at this age level are developing skills critical to healthy brain development, eye-hand coordination, motor planning, memory, and understanding of non-verbal cues. All of these skills are mastered best through real and concrete learning experiences. Furthermore, the young child learns best when all senses are engaged in learning and real learning experiences are occurring. ***For all of these reasons, we provide children with a screen-free learning environment.***

Per the recommendation of health professionals, parents of this age group should monitor and limit screen time as much as possible.

**Toilet Training**

We are not licensed for diapers or pull-ups. Children must be toilet training when admitted to our school. Teachers will work with children. Please let the school know of any developmental or physical delays in regard to toileting.

**Tuition**

As a private, independent school, Beverly Montessori relies exclusively on tuition and private contributions. Parents must sign a Parent Academic Agreement during the enrollment process. It is agreed that the students will be enrolled for the entire contracted term. Tuition is payable in ten installments, as outlined in the Agreement. The first installment is a nonrefundable payment. The remainder of the tuition is broken down and paid in 9 installments on the 15<sup>th</sup> or last day of each month. Families may choose to pay ahead of their schedule as well.

Families are required to enroll in the online tuition management system FACTS.

A \$10.00 late fee is charged for tuition payments received after the due dates and \$25.00 fee for returned checks.

In case of an emergency situation or other circumstances where tuition cannot be paid on time, please contact the school so that special arrangements can be made.

If tuition is not received in full by a child's last day of school, the school will not release records requests for the child's new school until payment has been received. If the child is a kindergartener, failure to pay in full by the child's last day of school will also result in withholding the child's kindergarten report until payment is received in full.

**Toys**

Toys are superfluous in a Montessori classroom full of interesting activities. We understand that young children may need to bring a favorite toy as a link with home, but these toys are placed in a bin or locker until dismissal, so as not to distract children from their work. Please do your best to leave toys at home or in the car instead of bringing them into the school.

**Universal Screeners**

Beverly Montessori School administers the Brigance Early Childhood Universal Screener to all children each year of school. This is administered by teachers and staff. All kindergarten children are administered the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) three times a year (fall, winter, and spring).

## **Health Policies and Procedures**

### **COVID-19**

Please refer to the *Parent Guideline for COVID-19* document for more information about how we are responding to the coronavirus pandemic, which supplements the information below.

### **Illness**

Our school implements hand-washing policies for children and adults especially: when entering the school from outdoors, when you have a cold, you have used the bathroom, or are about to eat or handle food. Hand washing is the best preventative for illnesses. We encourage all our students and staff to wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.

Parents should instruct their children about good hygiene practices. The following practices are encouraged at school:

- Cough or sneeze into your shoulder or inside of your elbow.
- Wash your hands often and well with soap, especially if you have cold symptoms, you have used the bathroom, you are about to eat, or you've come in from playing outside, shopping, etc.
- Throw your used tissue away in a wastebasket.
- Keep your hands and objects away from your eyes, mouth, ears, and nose.

### **When Your Child is Sick**

- Please notify the school of your child's symptoms.
- If your child is sick (cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) they must stay home for at least 24 hours and longer if symptoms have not cleared. They cannot return to school until they are symptom free.
- They need a doctor's note clearing them to return or a negative PCR COVID-19 test, if the symptoms last longer than 24 hours. Please make sure these are on file when dropping off your symptom-free child to school.
- For congestion (runny nose), as long as it is a clear discharge from nose (no discoloration) and the child can control/manage it -- (does not have to blow nose every 5 minutes, gets mucus on the works, or has to change mask often), the child can return to school.

Contagious Diseases -- Please let the office know if your child becomes ill with a contagious illness, so that we may alert other parents to watch for symptoms in their child. The children in your child's class will receive a note stating the illness and its symptoms.

- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease, Fifth's Disease, Chicken Pox, Hepatitis A, Impetigo,
- Lice -- stay home until the day after treatment and there are no eggs (nits) or live lice
- Ringworm -- Home 24 hours after treatment
- Scabies -- Home 24 hours after treatment
- Strep Throat and Scarlet Fever -- Stay home until after 24 hours on antibiotics
- Pink Eye -- Stay Home until 24 hours of treatment
- Antibiotics -- Need to be on antibiotics when prescribed by a doctor for a full 24 hours before returning

The City of Chicago requires a physician's note allowing children to attend school

- after an illness of 3 school days or more,
- after a communicable disease (see list above),
- at the discretion of the school.

If your child has allergies or a medical condition we should be aware of, please notify the office **before** your child attends our school.

### **Hand Sanitizer**

Please do not send your child with their own hand sanitizer. Children wash their hands often and all teachers have classroom hand sanitizer to use when necessary. We have to keep all hand sanitizer and cleaning chemicals out of reach of children at all times.

### **Immunizations/Doctor Visits**

A schedule of recommended ages for immunizations is included with all health forms yearly. This also details the other medical form requirements for your child. The Illinois Department of Public Health requires students entering preschool, kindergarten, 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade to have a physical exam and immunizations completed by the first day of school, or they will not be allowed to enter class. A tuberculin skin test (intradermal Mantoux test, not multiple puncture test) **upon first entry into school** and at grades 5 and 9 for Cook County. Children attending preschool are also required to have the hepatitis B, haemophilus influenza type b (Hib) and the varicella chickenpox vaccinations. Parents need to complete the health history section at top of page two and sign it. The physician needs to complete the required information in the immunization and physical examination sections. The lead screening and Tuberculin skin test

sections must be filled out, at the discretion of the doctor. This form must be personally signed and dated (NOT STAMPED) by your doctor and brought to school by their first day of school. Beverly Montessori School is a registered school with the State of Illinois, therefore, we must follow Illinois law. Children are only allowed to be exempt from immunizations and/or examinations for medical or religious reasons. The school must be informed of this in advance of their first day of school and we must have proper documentation on file.

The state of Illinois requires a mandatory dental exam for all students in kindergarten, second and sixth grades. Your licensed dentist should complete the state form and return it to us. The state also requires a comprehensive eye examination for children entering kindergarten. Forms, including waivers, can be obtained at the Illinois Department of Public Health web site [www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us). Click on "a-z topics," then click on "child health examination forms."

### ***Medical Emergencies/Injuries at School***

If an accident or a medical condition occurs at school, a child's parents (or other adults indicated on the School Health Form) are contacted immediately. A staff member will follow the FIRST AID guidelines and will see that the child is comfortable. If necessary, we will call for an emergency mobile unit to transport the child to the emergency room. If moving the child would be harmful, 911 will be called for an emergency mobile unit. The School Health Form on file in our office is also taken with the child, so that emergency treatment can be given immediately in the absence of the parent. Please make sure this form is on file with the office and all information is always up-to-date.

### ***Medication***

Our staff will administer medication only when requested by parents and an authorized physician. All medications must be brought to school in the original container labeled with the child's name, prescription number, medication name and dosage, date and refill, doctor's name, pharmacy and phone number. Over the counter drugs must be brought in their original container and with the child's name on it. Cough drops are considered medication. Under no circumstance, may a student medicate him/herself.

### **Questions or Concerns**

Please contact the office with any questions or concerns about the Parent Handbook or any other processes or procedures. Please contact your child's contact teacher with any questions about the classroom or classroom procedures.