

# Parent/Guardian Handbook



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# Welcome

We are delighted you have chosen Green Gables Montessori School to begin your child's educational journey. Developing and nurturing your child's love of learning is a responsibility we take very seriously. Our goal is to provide an educational atmosphere that incorporates the Montessori Philosophy emphasizing development of your child's mind, body and spirit. Please take time to read this handbook. It is designed to answer many of the questions you may have regarding school policies and procedures. We encourage parents to take an active role in their child's educational experience. Over the course of the school year there will be numerous opportunities for parents to participate in activities and events. If you have any questions or concerns during your enrollment at Green Gables Montessori, feel free to speak to your child's teacher or the school's Director.

## Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori approach offers a broad vision of education as an aide to life. Montessori education is characterized by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits and respect for a child's natural psychological development. The Montessori approach is based upon the natural laws of human development. Maria Montessori observed that children under six absorb limitlessly and effortlessly from the world around them and in so doing lay down all the foundations for later in life. The mixed age group allows the children to develop socially, intellectually and emotionally. It is an essential part of any Montessori School. Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural tendency to work. The children's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult. Through their work, the children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline. With-in a framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities.

### **Principles of Montessori Education**

Montessori is about learning to balance responsibility with freedom of choice. It offers children the opportunity to realize their potential in a non-competitive environment and seeks to promote:

- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- A sense of achievement and self-worth
- A sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions
- Independence and adaptability
- Cooperation with others and a sense of community
- Respect for the rights and needs of others
- Initiative and self-motivation

- Concentration and persistence in completing a task
- Educating in the context of the whole child, taking into account the social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects
- Developing the human potential
- Making the connection between life and the universe
- Embracing home, school and the greater community as part of the educational approach
- Offering a learning environment of minimal interruptions and interferences
- Nurturing relationships that satisfy the true needs of the child

There are three key components for the optimal Montessori working environment: the prepared environment, the children and the adult.

## Mission Statement

We at Green Gables Montessori School strive to provide excellence in Montessori education. We believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential and be treated with kindness and respect in his or her environment. We are dedicated to the preparation of the whole child, while providing an enriched and welcoming learning community that embodies the Montessori principles of respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment. We nurture, inspire and support each child's individual development, by fostering the growth of self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, and personal and social responsibility.

## Eligibility

Green Gables Montessori accepts children between the ages of 2.5 and 9 years of age. To be admitted in the preschool program the child must be 2.5 years old and in the process of being potty trained. They must also complete an in-school observation period of 2 hours before they are admitted into the program. We observe to see if the child is able to follow directions, can work safely with our materials, and if the Montessori environment will be beneficial for the child.

We prefer if the child does not wear diapers or pull ups at home or school (not including nighttime or naps) to help with the potty-training process. The school will assist in the process of potty-training students, but equal partnership needs to be given to help the child have a successful outcome. Children who are non-potty trained will be given a higher tuition rate until they have completed their training.

# Enrollment Policy

We require parents of potential students to tour our facility before applying for admission. Parents interested in enrolling their child must then submit a completed application form and schedule an in-class observation of their child with the Director before they are officially accepted.

**A)** If there is a waiting list, receipt of a completed application packet and non-refundable application fee places a child on the list. You will be notified when there is an opening. Children are accepted into the school in the order in which they apply, with two exceptions: siblings and children with previous Montessori experience are considered first.

**B)** The forms must be fully completed before the child can begin attendance in the program. Parent is solely responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information contained within those forms and for keeping all such information current. Provider assumes no responsibility for keeping forms updated. Parent is required to fill out a new registration form with updated information annually.

- a) Application for admission with \$150.00 application fee
- b) Consent Form
- c) Signed statement acknowledging receipt of Parent Handbook
- d) Health Information \*
- e) Medication form
- g) Sick Child policy
- h) One of the following-

At time of initial attendance;

\*A certificate of immunization showing a minimum of 1 dose of each immunizing agent specified by the Department of Community Health. Restrictions, if any, on activities shall be stated by a licensed physician; **or**

\* An official certified waiver issued by Kitsap County Department of Public Health.

\* A signed statement (provided annually) that the child is in good health and that the Parent assumes responsibility for the child's state of health while at the school, if the Parent objects to physical examination or medical treatment on religious grounds.

\* Health information and physicals shall be updated as follows:

- a.** Annually for children eight (18) months through twenty-nine (29) months.
- b.** Every two years for children thirty (30) months through preschool age.
- c.** When entering kindergarten.

# Class Placement

Children between the ages of 2.5 and 5 are automatically enrolled in our Preschool program, and older children are enrolled in our Kindergarten or Small Group Tutoring program. The groups within the Woodland class are broken up depending on age, gender, familial relationships, days enrolled, and social relationships to ensure that numbers are equal on both sides of the classroom. Both groups will have children of mixed ages and the same amount of attention and care that the other group will receive.

Parents/Guardians of children who are 5 or who will be 5 during the school year, may request to enroll their child in the Kindergarten program. Acceptance will be based on availability, age, and academic and social maturity. Children who are not quite 5 may be enrolled in the Kindergarten but may not have a Kindergarten certificate issued to them if they have not fulfilled our requirements to move onto the first grade.

# Withdrawal Policy

All children are accepted on a trial basis. The first 30 days of attendance are considered probationary. During the probationary period, Provider will determine if a child will fit within its program. Alternately, the parent can determine if his/her child is adapting to the school environment. Withdrawal during the probationary period does not require a 30-day written notice. Should it become necessary to withdraw your child from the program after the initial probationary period, a 30-day written notice is required in order to be eligible for any unused payments made. You will not be entitled to a refund of any unused tuition, should you fail to give a 30-day written notice.

## **Termination of Agreement**

Either Parent or Provider may terminate the childcare agreement upon 30-day written notice to the other party. Provider reserves the right to terminate this agreement immediately, without notice to Parent:

- a)** If the child's continued participation in the program creates a threat to the child, other children, the Provider or the Provider's staff. Please refer to our Discipline Policy for more information regarding this particular situation.
- b)** Tuition and/or fees are not paid when due.
- c)** Parent engages in inappropriate parent conduct

# Registration Fee

A non-refundable annual registration fee will be assessed upon enrollment.

Child \$150

Family \$250

Returning Student \$75

# Tuition

Monthly tuition payments are due on the first of the month. Tuition that is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will incur a \$50 late fee. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate and permanent dismissal from the program. There is no credit given for vacation, child illness, suspension, or closings due to emergency situations or inclement weather. Tuition payments are accepted in the form of check or credit card. However, during the summer, a \$100 credit will be given for each week of vacation.

There will be a \$50 fee assessed for tuition checks returned by the bank for any reason. Parents will be responsible for re-issuing a second check.

# Non-Discrimination Policy

The provider will maintain and conduct all practices relating to enrollment, discipline, and all other terms and benefits of child care services provided in a manner which does not discriminate against any child, parent or family based on race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, marital status, sex or handicap. This facility is non-sectarian and non-discriminatory in the administration of its policies.

# Daily Schedule

## **Preschool – Kindergarten**

A day in the preschool and kindergarten Montessori classroom includes individual lessons, group time in art, music and weekly Spanish classes. Every child works in a prepared environment at a pace and level they are comfortable with. Children also have the opportunity for outdoor play, weather permitting each day. Preschool and kindergarten children have snacks, lunch and the opportunity to nap each day.

## **Small Group Tutoring**

Children in this group will have the opportunity to have help with their school assignments and still be given opportunities to run and play outside. They will have help with their online course work to ensure that they have both understood and are able to complete their assignments.

# Arrival and Departure Policy

Green Gables Montessori is located at 9000 Ridgetop Boulevard NW. Parents dropping their child during our school drop-off time (8:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.) should enter from Blaine Avenue NW. From there, we ask that families please drive along the fence and then walk their child to the playground before signing them in or out of Transparent Classroom.

Parents who have more than one student in attendance are asked to park on the lower half of Williams Flower & Gift store and help their children to the gate. The same procedure will be repeated during our school pick up times (3:15 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.). Please keep your conversations with the teacher short as other parents may be waiting to pick up their child or to speak with the teacher.

If you arrive before 8:15 am or depart after 3:45 pm please pick up your child in the building and sign them in and out.

**It is important that you be on time.** Children arriving late disturb the classroom, frequently miss group lessons, and make taking attendance more difficult. Please contact the school if your child will be absent or tardy.

# Child Release Policy

Parent must supply the names of at least three individuals to whom the Provider may release the child in the event of an emergency. The Provider will not release the child to any individual whose name is not on the list. Before the Provider releases the child, if the individual is unknown to Provider or any one of the Provider's staff, the Provider/staff will require that the individual show positive identification in the form of a valid Washington Driver's License or other state issued identification. Other forms of identification, such as work identification, are not acceptable. Individual must be 18 years of age or older. Should Parent wish to have a one-time special exception to allow an individual not listed on the card to pick the child up, Parent must leave a signed, dated, written note with Provider the morning of the release.

If a parent of the child is not permitted to pick up the child from the school, we ask that we are provided with the court orders and a photo of the parent.

# School Closing

The school and the childcare program will be closed when the local public-school district closes **for weather emergencies**. Green Gables Montessori at 9000 Ridgetop Boulevard NW is located in the Central Kitsap School District. The school and childcare program may also be closed due to loss of electricity, fire damage,

communicable disease outbreaks, etc. A calendar noting days off and other events will be distributed in the fall. **Parent agrees to arrange alternate emergency childcare for these situations.**

## **Holidays**

Below is a rough guideline for holiday closings; however, a school calendar with specific dates is available at the beginning of each new school year.

- Monday observing Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day, the preceding Wednesday and following Friday
- A minimum of one (1) full week for the Christmas/New Year holidays
- A minimum of two days in February for winter break
- Friday preceding and Monday observing Memorial Day
- A minimum of one day in observance of Independence Day
- A minimum of on full week, approximately the last week of August

On days where we offer child care only, space is reserved for children who are enrolled in our Before or After Care program. If space is available, we will offer additional spaces to students enrolled in our school program (8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) at a rate of \$50 per day.

## **Health Policy**

Green Gables Montessori follows the American Academy of Pediatrics guideline for deciding when to keep your child home in the event of illness. Any sick child should be kept home especially when they have:

- Diarrhea or stools that contain blood or mucus or cannot be contained in a diaper
- Fever of 100 degrees or over (without medication)
- Vomiting
- Cold or flu symptoms, e.g. sore throat, green runny nose, persistent cough or sneezing
- Rash or discharge from the eyes or nose
- Head lice or nits
- Sluggishness, persistent crying, irritability, or difficulty breathing
- Contagious or communicable disease
- Child "not well enough to go outside"
- All children must be symptom free for 72 hours without medication.

### **When a Child Becomes Sick at the Program**

Provider will report to Parent any accidents, suspected illnesses, or other changes observed in the health of a child. Provider will notify Parent when the child is exposed to a communicable disease while in care so that Parent may monitor the child for symptoms. When a child becomes ill while at the program, Provider and/or



staff will comfortably isolate the child in an area where the child can be supervised and will immediately contact Parent, who will be required to pick the child up within one hour of notification. We will not administer Tylenol or other products, including aspirin to treat a fever. This can mask symptoms of illness and contagion. Child must be free of all illness and/or symptoms for a minimum of 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medication, before returning. **This policy will be strictly adhered to.**

## Emergency Medical Care

Parent gives permission to the Provider to call 911 in the event of a serious emergency. Any costs or charges incurred for 911 emergencies are the sole responsibility of Parent. Parent will be notified immediately, or as soon as we are able to contact them to inform them of the medical emergency. If time is of the essence the Parent will need to meet the child and a staff member in the ambulance at the hospital.

## Medication Policy

When a Parent requests that the center administer medication, the following provisions shall apply:

- a) Medication, prescription or nonprescription, shall be given to a child by an adult caregiver only.
- b) Medication, including prescription drugs, or individual special medical procedures, will be given or applied only with **prior written permission from Parent.**
- c) Prescription medication shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication and shall be given in accordance with those instructions. Provider will not honor any instructions from Parent, which, contradict the instructions of the physician.
- d) Provider/caregiver will maintain a record as to the time and the amount of any medication given or applied.
- e) The Provider/caregiver will keep the medication out of the reach of children and will return the medication to Parent or destroy it when no longer needed.
- f) Parent is required to sign the Medical Release form, for each medication to be taken. Form requires name of medication, dosage to be administered, and time medication should be administered, as well as, name and telephone number of prescribing physician.

# Fieldtrips

Trips are chosen carefully with educational value, fun, and cost as the major factors. Parents may be asked to pay for an occasional fieldtrip. Fieldtrips are scheduled monthly and occur more often during the summer months. Parents are encouraged to come on fieldtrips but are required to drive and meet us at the destination. A field trip form will be posted in the classroom at least 24 hours in advance, with date, time, teachers and children attending along with the destination. The monthly newsletter will also list the field trip scheduled for that month.

An alternative to field trips is to bring presentations to the children. All the children enjoy such things as puppet shows, musicians, and various other presenters. The younger children also enjoy being the audience for performance given by the older children.

There is a No-Smoking policy when transporting children on field trips, or anywhere in the center where children are or will be present.

# Parent Volunteers

Parents are very important to us, and we welcome your comments and suggestions at all times. Parents are also valued helpers in and out of the classroom. Individual classroom teachers may indicate areas in which they could use help (parties, field trips, making materials, reading with children, sharing a special talent, etc.). The center, as a whole, also depends upon your help in fund raising activities and with occasional whole-school events.

We appreciate parent assistance and encourage involvement; the center runs much more smoothly, and the children's experience is enhanced when the whole team (staff, parents, and children) works together. All volunteers who are in the school on a regular basis, for extended periods of time, shall have a background check performed, as well as, having a TB test. Volunteers shall act in accordance with all school policies and regulations as stated in this Parent Handbook.

# Outdoor Policy

Active outdoor play is a basic component of a quality Montessori program and the children go outdoors throughout the year. The Provider uses reasonable discretion in deciding if weather conditions are appropriate for outdoor play; heavy rain and temperatures lower than 20 degrees F. keep the children in.

**Due to staff ratios, we are unable to keep children inside due to illness. If your child is too ill to go outside, we ask that they stay home until they are well enough to participate in all school activities.**

## Nap and Rest Period

Every child in our Preschool program is required to have a rest period. The children lay down and rest for a minimum of 45 minutes. During the rest time the children will listen to relaxing music or a story. Each week your child must bring a fitted crib sheet to cover the nap mat and a blanket. A small cuddly stuffed animal is optional (please no toys, only stuffed animals). Every Friday the nap bedding will be sent home to be washed and then needs to be returned the following Monday. After approximately 45 minutes the children not asleep will be offered to do quiet activities and join the lead teacher in small group and individual lessons.

Children in our Kindergarten and Tutoring program are not required to have a rest period.

## Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack

### **Breakfast**

We recognize that there may be days when there is not time for breakfast at home. Toddler, preschool and kindergarten children arriving between 7:30 – 8:00 may bring a simple, ready to eat breakfast from home.

### **Lunches**

A daily lunch must be provided by parent/guardian. Please include an ice pack for items that need to be cooled. A water bottle is also to be brought daily. The Provider will supply filtered water. Child's name should be clearly printed on lunchbox, thermos, and water bottles. Please keep the lunch healthy so they have the energy to get through their busy day.

When finished, the children tidy eating area, put away their lunchboxes, and transition to our rest time. Most leftover foods are placed back into the lunch box. Parents are then able to judge if the quantity of food is appropriate (there is a tendency to overestimate a small child's capacity when filling a lunch box.) Very messy leftovers (juice boxes, yogurt, etc.) are thrown away. Due to food allergies, we do not allow sharing of food.

### **Snacks**

Mid-morning and afternoon snacks are to be provided by the parents. A snack calendar will be sent home at the end of the previous month indicating which day your child is signed up for snack.

## Celebrations

The classrooms recognize major holidays with a celebration or activity presented in a fun and cultural manner rather than a religious event. Teachers usually post a sign indicating plans and/or needs. Parent assistance is welcomed.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are a fun celebration in the Montessori classroom. We celebrate each child's birthday on their actual birthday or on the following Monday if it lands on a week-end. We ask that you provide a picture for each year of your child's life (picture at birth, 1 year, 2 year and so on). This will be placed on a timeline. They will also have their "birthday circle" where they get to walk around the "sun", to celebrate each year of their life. You are welcome to send a treat for your child's class on his/her birthday. Please let the teacher know at least one (1) day in advance. Cookies, Donut Munchkins, mini cupcakes or other small, easy to eat finger foods are acceptable. **Please save the large cakes, large, overly frosted cupcakes, ice cream and balloons for home celebrations.**

## Student Clothing

One of the primary goals of a Montessori environment is to help children become independent in caring for themselves. Children, as Dr. Montessori noted, will often say, "Help me do it myself" As part of this goal, it is important to provide children with clothing they can get in and out of independently. Please dress your child in clothing that he or she can successfully adjust without adult help. Also, children should be dressed in casual and comfortable clothing that allows for freedom of movement and the freedom to explore their environment.

Clothing should not be cumbersome or too fancy as to inhibit the child's ability to explore water, art, the outdoors, and movement. Each child needs a pair of hard soled slippers to leave at school. These slippers will only be worn inside the school environment and should be such that the child can independently put them on or remove them. Occasionally, accidents happen-water spills or an item breaks and thus the inside shoes MUST have a hard sole to best protect the child's feet from injury. In addition, open-toed shoes, or flip-flops are **NOT** permitted.

Each child should bring 2 to 3 extra sets of clothing to school so that he or she has something to change into if clothing becomes soiled. Please label all extra clothing with the child's initials. Your child will get dirty. Outdoor clothing should also be appropriate for the season. Since our outdoor environments become particularly muddy, we ask that each child bring rain boots. **It is important to label each item of clothing and pair of shoes.**

## Toy Policy and Sharing

Provider discourages Parent from allowing children to bring personal items from home except for a small naptime blanket and cuddle toy, if necessary. When a child does bring personal items from home, the Provider will ask the child to leave such items in their tote bags, lunch bags, etc. Provider is not responsible for loss or any

damage to that item. Our experience has been that children usually have difficulty sharing these items with other children and loss or damage may occur.

Sharing days are an exception to this rule: Fridays are sharing days where your child is welcome to bring a special item from home that starts with the sound of the week. The letter/sound of the week will be posted in your child's classroom.

## Discipline Policy

Children, at this age, often act out with physical actions (ex. biting, kicking, or hitting) or by screaming and crying as a means of expression for when they are angry or frustrated due to their limited vocabulary and skill set. We will not typically raise concerns over such actions and instead seek ways to deescalate the situation. At Green Gables Montessori our goal is to give children the tools that will allow them to be successful during their time at our school, after they leave our school, and later in life. We achieve this by helping them to express their emotions in an appropriate manner, explaining the cause and effect of actions, teaching empathy and compassion, and finding other means of seeking a positive and peaceful resolution.

If, however, the situation continues despite our best efforts to help curtail them, children begin to become anxious or worried when the child is present, or there are visible signs of harm to the other child (ex. scratches that cause bleeding, biting that pierces the skin), then we will give a Behavior Report Form(s) to a parent or guardian. The Behavior Report Form(s) will include a description of the incident and a consequence that has been taken. This may include asking a parent to pick up their child early from the program, having a Parent and Teacher Conference, suspension from the program, or termination from the program. This form must be dated, signed, and returned to us. Termination from the program will occur if no improvement has been made in regard to the child's behavior or if the parent or guardian have refused to acknowledge the situation at hand and/or failed to follow through on the plans discussed with the teacher and/or director.

## Parent/Guardian Conduct

Green Gables Montessori expects the parent/guardians of enrolled students to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy and respect at all times. One of the goals of Green Gables Montessori is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the teachers and director but also each and every parent or other adult who enters the school. Parents will be expected to behave in a manner which fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on the school property thereafter.

- Swearing/Cursing: No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other profane language on school property at any time.
- Threatening of Employee's, children, other parents of adults associated with Green Gables Montessori. Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.
- Physical punishment of your child (or other children) at the school. While Green Gables Montessori does not seek to impose our disciplinary standards on families, the corporal punishment of children is prohibited in our school or on the grounds. While verbal reprimand may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. If you see a situation between children that warrants an adult taking actions, please bring it to the teacher's attention immediately.
- Smoking: Green Gables Montessori prohibits smoking in or around the school at all times.

## Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent Conferences are held once a year in November for our four and five-year-old students. A sign up sheet will be available for you to choose a time in the afternoon for you to meet with your child's teachers. The conferences are 20 minutes to insure each parent has time to talk about the progress of their child. Conferences are available for younger children but are scheduled on a case by case basis between the Parent and teachers as needed.

It is most important that you keep the teachers and caregivers informed of any changes in the home situation that might affect your child, or anything that comes up in conversation with him/her that you think the school should be aware of. Classroom and office staff is always willing to help solve a problem or answer questions. If conversations with the child teachers or director will take more than a few minutes, please make sure to schedule a time for a meeting or conference so we can make sure the staff ratios are being met within the classroom.

## Confidential Information

Each child has a right to confidentiality. All information pertaining to the children in the program, including all reports, records, and data are confidential and used for internal purposes only. Information pertaining to children enrolled in the program will not be released to third parties without the express written permission of Parent, unless required by statute, court order or licensing mandate.

# Mandated Reporters

Under the Child Protection Services Act, mandated reporters are to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. All employees of Green Gables Montessori are considered mandated reporters under the law.

We take this responsibility seriously and do everything within our means to protect the welfare and best interest of the children in our school. Suspicions need not be discussed with parents before potential abuse or neglect is reported.

**PARENT COPY**

**Statement Acknowledging Parent’s Receipt of Handbook**

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge and Parent(s) name(s) agree with the following:

1. I/We have reviewed the Program Handbook (“Handbook”) of Green Gables Montessori School
2. I/We understand a hard copy of the Program Handbook is available from the school.
3. A staff member of Green Gables Montessori has reviewed the Program Handbook with me/us.
4. I/We have read and agree to comply with the policies contained in the Handbook which govern the terms of the child care contract and have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the content of the Handbook.
5. I/We understand that the Handbook reflects the current policies and procedures of Green Gables Montessori School
6. I/We agree that I/We will conform to these policies and procedures and understand that these policies and benefits may be, amended, modified, terminated or replaced by Green Gables Montessori School.
7. I/We understand that this Handbook is the property of Green Gables Montessori School and must be returned to Green Gables Montessori School upon termination of child care services.

**This form must be signed and returned to Green Gables Montessori School before child may attend the program.**

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature	_____ Date
_____ Parent/Guardian Signature	_____ Date
_____ Staff Signature	_____ Date



**SCHOOL COPY**

**Statement Acknowledging Parent’s Receipt of Handbook**

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_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
_____	_____
Staff Signature	Date