

Renaissance Montessori School
2407 Cascade Road SW
Atlanta, GA 30311
404/755-1915

PARENT HANDBOOK ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Please review the following handbook closely to be aware of the proper procedures and policies by which the school is operated. These policies are implemented for the safety and comfort of the children, as well as the effective operation of the school. Some of them are required by law. Parents can find all posted notices on the classroom board.

Mission Statement

Under the directories and guidance of American Montessori Internationale (AMI) and other recognized accrediting agencies, we offer a carefully prepared environment and curriculum with which we help each child to realize his or her many individual potentialities (intellectual, social, moral, etc) and in doing so create a Joy of Learning. When one experiences joy in the learning process, one becomes a lifelong seeker of knowledge.

ADMISSIONS

Each applicant, regardless of background, is considered according to individual need, and each is admitted according to the school's ability to help develop individual potential.

Each child is admitted into a mixed age grouping, and each period of learning is regarded as a three-year cycle (2 ½ to 5 ½ years, grades 1, 2, and 3, and grades 4 and 5).

We consider each application in the order of its submission. If there is a waiting list, openings will be filled as space becomes available. We accept children of a minimum age of 2 ½ who are fully toilet trained. If space permits, Elementary children ages 6-11 may be accepted into the program with a teacher recommendation, current report card, testing results, attendance report, and previous school's current records.

Upon receipt of the application form, we will arrange for your visit to the school and for your child's visit to the school at a time apart from the parent's observations of the classrooms. An interview is arranged between the parents and the Educational Director to discuss the school program and the student's needs. The lead teacher will interview children.

When placing newly enrolled children, the administration balances considerations such as number of students in each class, age of children and gender of children. Class placement is at the discretion of the Educational Director.

New students are admitted for a six-week trial period. At the end of this time either the school or the family may decide that Renaissance is not the right setting for the child. If your child has a history of a behavior or learning problem, please discuss and share all pertinent information with us in order to assist us with your child's placement and learning strategies.

Once enrolled, program changes must be requested in writing and must be done through the School Office. Changes go into effect at the first of the month. A minimum of one-week notice is required so that student/teacher ratios will be in compliance.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Renaissance Montessori School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the organization. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other organization-administered programs.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION POLICIES

Please keep in mind that enrollment in the school is for the entire academic year. The tuition is ACADEMIC YEAR tuition and no adjustments are made for absences or holidays. If you must withdraw your child from Renaissance, a 30-day written notice to the School Office is required, or the tuition and fees for that month are due and payable. If your child is absent for two weeks and the school does not receive prior notification of absence, your space will be forfeited.

An application fee of \$50.00 applies. This covers the administrative time devoted to interviews, student assessment, and obtaining records.

A \$250.00 per child per academic year registration fee applies and is non-refundable.

A materials fee of \$100 per child per academic year applies for Primary Students.
A materials fee of \$150 per child per academic year applies for Elementary Students.

Parents are responsible for supplying and maintaining accurate information on their child, which may be required by the state and/or school.

Sending a child to an independent school is a significant investment. At the same time, all independent schools have expenses of a continuing nature that must be met such as lease and maintenance, professional salaries and supplies, licensing and association fees. To keep tuition as reasonable as possible, we have to operate on a carefully prepared budget for the entire year. It is essential that our income from tuition be assured. A late payment fee of \$30 will apply for all tuition installments made after the 5th of the month. Renaissance will suspend students whose tuition installments are not **paid in full by the last school day of the month.**

Tuition is payable in one of two ways:

Plan A: Two installments, due August 1 and January 1 (deduct 5% from tuition as a

discount for using Plan A)

Plan B: Ten installments, August 1 through May 1.

Please remit tuition payments to the School Office and address all tuition/fee matters or inquiries to the Office as well.

No partial payments of tuition installments will be accepted.

There is a \$35 fee for returned checks. If an individual's check is returned, that individual will be required to make future payments in the form of cash, money order or certified funds.

All additional fees such as late pay fee, late pick-up fees, returned check fees or another fee is due 5 days from the date of the invoice. Renaissance considers late pay fees, late pick-up fees, returned check fees as part of the month's tuition installment.

If amounts must be collected by or through an attorney at law, reasonable attorney's fees will be added to the amount due.

New students are admitted for a six-week trial period. At the end of this time, if either the school or the family feels this is not the appropriate setting for the child, tuition will be prorated for the time the child attended school.

Records will be released for students transferring to another school if all financial obligations have been met.

A 10% discount is given to the first sibling enrolled, and each subsequent sibling.

Income from tuition is applied to the operational costs of the school and its educational programs. We solicit contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals. Any contribution to us is a tax-deductible expense and will help us in providing a quality program for your child.

Renaissance believes that parents are our best "advertisement." Should you refer a family who registers their child at Renaissance, the school will credit your \$250 registration fee back to your child's account.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SAFETY

It is Renaissance's policy to promote a genial and safe environment for its students, employees, parents and visitors. The school is committed to working with its students, employees, parents and visitors to maintain an environment free from abusive and threatening behavior, violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. While this kind of conduct is not frequent or pervasive at our school, no school is immune.

Disruptive behavior at one time or another will affect every school. Abusive and threatening behavior, violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior will not be tolerated; that is, all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Such behavior can include a show of anger or rage,

swearing and argumentativeness, oral or written statements, other gestures or expressions that gives alarm and communicate a direct or indirect threat of harm, and property damage. Such behavior includes all instances of corporal punishment of a child on school grounds. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed immediately from the premise. Individuals who commit such acts will receive a warning upon the first offense and may have his/her access to the campus limited. Upon the second offense, the individual may be denied access to the campus. If you observe or experience such behavior by anyone on the school premises report it immediately to the Director. The Director who receives such reports should seek advice from the Board of Directors regarding investigating the incident and initiating appropriate action. We will support the efforts made by students, staff, parents, and visitors in dealing with disruptive behavior and will monitor whether this policy is being implemented effectively. If you have questions about this policy statement, please contact the school's Board of Directors.

DISCIPLINE

One of the goals of the Montessori Program is to help the child reach a level of inner discipline. Discipline is achieved by directing the child towards a meaningful or engaging activity. When the child is engaged with or concentrating on a task of his/her choice, he/she is in essence showing disciplined behavior. Discipline is not a matter of the adult controlling the child, but rather of the child directing his/her own energy into productive, practical tasks. When the child or adult is busy with a satisfying task, he/she does not engage in antisocial behavior.

Besides providing the proper environment for keeping a child constructively engaged, the Montessori classroom has ground rules set up to protect individual rights and to preserve the classroom cohesion and order. The rules are easy to understand and are few in number for the young child to grasp. When individuals' rights have been infringed upon or an action is disorderly or unsafe, the adult takes positive steps for correcting the actions. The adult acts not out of anger or an authoritarian posture, but in an effort to avoid power struggles and in an effort to teach a concept to the child that the child may not grasp. Often "misbehavior" is a result of the child having not arrived at an understanding of the appropriate behavior or having not arrived at the developmental stage that allows the child to control his/her own impulses. The Montessori philosophy of education forbids the corporal punishment of a child, as well as verbal abuse or humiliation. Threats are not used as a method of controlling a child's behavior.

Disciplinary action may involve:

- *Positive example by the teacher

- *Reiterating the rule objectively (i.e. "Pencils are used for writing on paper, not the table").

- *Counseling with the child (i.e. "Its OK to be angry, but not OK to throw things").

- *Set specific limitations for the child (i.e. instead of "Don't mistreat the book!" show the child how to handle the book. "Look how carefully I am turning the page, and when I'm finished I will put it gently on the shelf").

- *Providing a concrete consequence for an action (i.e. "If you choose to throw the puzzle pieces, you may not use the puzzles the whole day" – teacher would remove the puzzles if necessary).

*"Quiet time" –sitting by oneself in the classroom or on the playground.

*Removal from the classroom – reserved for defiant, disorderly, violent or persistent misbehavior.

If the behavior of a child poses any danger to that child or another child, the parents will be notified. We are a non-violent school. Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, biting or spitting will not be tolerated. The first offense will result in counseling by staff and prompt notification of parents. The second offense will result in suspension for one day. The same disciplinary action holds true for profanity or vulgar language, inappropriate touching, and deliberate abuse/breaking of an individual or school property.

If the parents are notified of a serious misbehavior 3 times, a pediatric evaluation is required to rule out physiological sources of the problem. A suspension is required to take care of this evaluation. Upon obtaining a medical/physical evaluation and counseling and providing the school written evidence of such evaluation/counseling, a specific time frame will be set for correcting the behavior. If the behavior is not corrected within the set time frame, the child will be removed from school.

If behavior seems to be a result of a physical or psychological condition, the teachers and parents will work together to determine what professional sources of help might be consulted. Parents will be notified of any behavior which is unusual or atypical for their child, or which is unusual or atypical for the developmental stage their child is in.

Behavioral and/or academic challenges must be managed by medical and/or counseling therapies in order to stay in school. Documentation of evaluations and/or counseling is required. The family, child, and school must all cooperate together to change the behavior affecting the student's ability to learn and be a positive member of the classroom community.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Good school attendance is essential to successful school progress. It shall be the responsibility of each student's parent or guardian to explain the student's absence. Students shall be temporarily excused for the following:

- The child's illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Religious holidays observed by the family's faith
- Orders governmentally mandated

Any student who is absent from school shall present a written excuse, signed by one of his/her parents or guardians. A physician's statement shall be presented for all absences that exceed five consecutive school days in a school year, and for all absences that are due to communicable diseases. Students exceeding 10 unexcused absences in one academic year will repeat the academic year, effectively delaying the student a traditional grade.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Two classroom observations and two parent/teacher conferences per academic year are required. During the school year, contact the school Office to arrange an

observation during the morning work cycle. Observations begin in October.

Parents should prepare for the conference by observing the class and then writing down two or more points they would like to discuss during the meeting. In choosing these points they should concentrate on academics as well as social development. The parent should also consider the child from the teacher's point of view and as a member of the classroom community.

Our aim is to measure the progress of the child as an individual against goals we set for that child, not in comparison to other students or groups of children. Rates of development vary widely among young children.

At the Elementary level, students may be invited to participate in the parent/teacher conference, which can be a positive experience for both the child and the parent.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Renaissance follows the ATLANTA CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM when closing due to inclement weather and/or emergency. Listen to your local news cast for ATLANTA CITY SCHOOL closings.

All children are required by law to have a GA Dept of Human Resources Certificate of Immunization and a letter from their physician stating that they are in good health. Must be submitted upon enrollment.

Accident

In the case of an accident, the parents will be notified immediately. If immediate medical attention is needed, the information listed on the child's emergency sheet on file will be followed. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, the medical release form on file will be used. Hospitals serving our area: Grady Memorial Hospital.

Illness

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parents will be called to take the child home. In the event that the parents cannot be reached, the individuals authorized to pick up the child will be called. It is expected that the child will be picked up immediately.

In the event that the school detects a rapidly rising fever in your child, the child will be given non-medical comforts, such as ice packs and a quiet place to rest until you arrive to take the child home. Renaissance will NOT administer over-the-counter medication to lower the fever. If the child's fever continues to rise and parents/emergency contacts cannot be reached, the school will contact 911 and follow the emergency response instructions. Please make sure your phone numbers for all emergency contacts are valid and up to date with the School Office.

Children who are suffering a fever, diarrhea, vomiting or other symptoms of a contagious illness should not be brought to school. Neither should children with a temperature 100 degrees F or higher. Children are not allowed in school if they have had a temperature within the last twenty-four hours (without aid of fever-reducing

medication) or vomited within the last twenty-four hours.

If the child is taking any medication that could possibly affect behavior, please notify the teacher.

Let the office know if your child will be out sick for more than one day. Please inform the School Office of the nature of the illness.

Medications

The school will not administer any medication.

Should your child require medication during school hours, a parent or guardian may administer the medication on site. Please call the office in advance if this is necessary.

Children with severe allergies may check in emergency medication (Epi-pens, Benedryl) along with the child's emergency information sheet at the school office. All emergency medication must be labeled with a doctor's prescription. NO over-the-counter allergy medication will be accepted.

Infectious Diseases

Please review the enclosed chart of infectious diseases. Parents are notified when a communicable disease is introduced into the school by a sign on the classroom doors. Recovering children will be readmitted to school according to the recommendations outlined in the chart AND WITH A DOCTOR'S PERMISSION SLIP. NO EXCEPTIONS.

The school has in place emergency plans to protect the children in the event of a fire or emergency weather situation (Tornado). These procedures are posted on the class bulletin board.

BEFORE SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

If necessary, remind your child to go to the bathroom as he/she enters the classroom. Children are free to go when they need to, but reminders help avoid accidents.

Toys are not permitted at school. If toys or other distracting objects are brought to school, the teacher will hold them until the end of the day when the child can take them home. Jewelry or other valuables should not be worn to school, as they often are a source of distraction and the school cannot be responsible for loss or breakage.

If the child wishes to bring something to school, we welcome educational books, pictures, and tapes, items the child has made or that relate to our studies. Put your child's name on all articles.

ARRIVALS

Please be on time to school. Class begins at 8:30 am. If there is a flow of late students, the work cycle is interrupted and concentration is difficult to achieve in the room. Also, many lessons are given at the time class starts, and anyone arriving late has missed an important part of the curriculum.

Arrival times are as follows:

Early Care:

Primary Students-

All arrivals between 7:30 am and 8:20 am: Come to the door of your child's classroom. Let the child enter independently. An adult will be there to receive your child into his/her classroom. If there is separation anxiety, a teacher will come to assist the child inside and comfort him/her. Please keep the drop off procedure short and try not to converse or linger in the doorway in the morning.

Elementary Students -

All arrivals between 7:30 AM and 8:20 AM. Students may enter the classroom independently through the Lower Elementary classroom door.

Class Begins:

Primary Students-

The Montessori 3-hour work cycle begins promptly at 8:30 AM. After 8:30 AM the child is considered late for class. There is a grace period of 1/2 hour in which your child's classroom door will still be answered and the child welcomed to class for the day.

After 9:00 AM the child will miss the school day, and will be welcomed back to class the next day.

The school understands that there are often appointments (doctor and dental) which cannot be set after school hours. Therefore, the late arrival policy will be excepted for parents who have made prior arrangements for a student's late arrival with the school office before 8:30 AM of that school day. Arrangements may be made via phone call to the office or by e-mail. In this instance, parents will need to sign in their child at the school office on arrival.

Elementary Students-

Please consider bringing your child to school by 8:20 AM in order that they have time to get prepared for class starting at 8:30 AM.

Students are considered tardy after 8:30 AM. Five tardies will be recorded as an unexcused absence.

The school understands that there are often appointments (doctor and dental) which cannot be set after school hours. Therefore, the late arrival policy will be excepted for parents who have made prior arrangements for a student's late arrival with the school office before 8:30 AM of that school day. Arrangements may be made via phone call to the office or by e-mail. In this instance, parents will need to sign in their child at the school office on arrival.

DISMISSAL

1:00 PM Dismissal

Your child will be waiting for you at her classroom door or on the playground. Children not picked up by 1:15pm will be assessed a late fee of \$10/hour.

3:00 PM Dismissal

Primary Students-

Your child will be waiting for you inside the classroom door. Students picked up after 3:15 should be picked up inside the building from the Aftercare program. A late pickup fee of \$10/hour will be assessed after 3:15 for students not enrolled in the Aftercare Program.

Elementary Students -

Your child will be waiting for you outside the Elementary Classroom. Dismissal ends at 3:15. Students picked up after 3:15 should be picked up inside the building from the Aftercare program. A late pickup fee of \$10/hour will be assessed after 3:15 for students not enrolled in the Aftercare Program.

6:30 PM Dismissal

Extended Services closes at 6:30pm. After 6:30 pm a late fee of \$30 per 15 minutes is charged. It is expected that children will be picked up by closing time. For children who are left at school 30 minutes beyond closing time, the emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child. If the emergency contacts cannot be reached, the child will be put in the care of the appropriate authorities. Renaissance reserves the right to expel students who exceed three late pickups (after 6:30 pm).

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE SAFETY

Parents and authorized pick-up contacts are required to escort the child to and from the school building.

Do not allow your children to enter the school building or exit the school building unattended. When walking to the car or vice versa, make sure that your child is physically with you and not running or walking the grounds unattended. Should you pause to converse or visit with staff or friends have your child remain physically with you. Together we can ensure the safety of all students.

When driving through the campus, do not exceed 5mph and carefully look for children who may dart into the lot or the driveway.

Other School Procedures and Information...

Let the morning goodbyes be short and allow your child to enter the classroom independently. If there is separation anxiety, the teacher will come to assist the child inside and comfort him/her.

Please do not try to engage the teachers in lengthy conversation in the mornings as their attention is expected to be directed towards the children. Should you have an immediate concern, you may go to the school Office. Should you wish to speak with the teacher only, ask her to call you that day at a given number.

Notify your teacher of any unusual circumstances that may affect the child's behavior such as a change in medication, change in family life, loss of a pet, etc. The teacher keeps all information strictly confidential. The teacher may ask you to enlighten another staff member who works with your child.

Please let the school office know when your child will be absent for more than one day, as take-home work may need to be prepared.

BIRTHDAYS

Please check with the teachers on how birthdays are to be celebrated. 'Parties' as such are not held at school. Children may gather for a group snack and a story told about the child's life. A gift from the child of a book or a plant to the class is a meaningful way to remember the day. It demonstrates that one can give and receive on the same occasion and the child is always proud to point out his/her contribution to the room.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any questions, comments, or suggestions should be first taken to your teacher. She can then best serve the needs of your child. Should you not be able to reach an understanding with the teacher, contact the Educational Director. If you, the teacher, and the Educational Director do not arrive at a resolution, you may contact your parent representative on the Board of Directors to arrange a time for all parties to meet together for a solution.

Renaissance encourages parent feedback, involvement, and participation. We advocate honest and clear exchange between all parties, adult and child alike. We are receptive to constructive criticisms and suggestions. The Montessori philosophy emphasizes honesty, directness, and fairness, as well as cohesion and unity. It discourages unconstructive comments, gossip, or other behavior that generally does not serve to correct problems or make improvements.

SNACK

Primary Students-

Parents provide snack for the classroom one week at a time on a rotating basis. Healthy, inexpensive, sugar-free, nut-free, additive-free foods such as fruits, vegetables, crackers, etc. Your teachers will advise you what and how much to bring, since snack menus must meet USDA standards.

CLOTHING

All Primary students need to have on hand DAILY a complete change of clothes. Label your child's garments and provide a plastic bag for the wet or soiled items. If your child stays beyond 1pm, please provide a second change of clothes for that part of the day. If a child has a toilet accident, soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag, unrinsed. We do not have separate washing and utility sinks, therefore health standards do not allow for the rinsing of clothing. Nappers should bring two beach-sized towels for nap. One for top, one for bottom. These will be sent home Friday to be laundered. The towels are considered to be more sanitary by childcare licensing authorities and are easily cleaned and stored. Please label all articles.

Children should wear clothing that will make their day easy – clothing that allows for free and safe movement, comfortable sitting, and without distraction. Clothing should allow the child to use the bathroom without help. Sturdy shoes with a no-skid surface are most suitable. Please choose shoes that your child can put on and off with the least assistance.

In cold weather all children need to wear hats and gloves. When weather permits we go outside, even in winter. Please label all articles.

WHAT TO BRING FOR LUNCH/LUNCH PROCEDURE

Lunch begins at 11:30 AM. You may either bring your own lunch or participate in the hot lunch program. If you do bring your own lunch, please provide a healthy, substantial lunch. Child Care licensing requires that lunches from home meet USDA standards. CCL also requires that of lunches from home do not meet USDA standards; the school is to serve the child an appropriate lunch and charge the parent a corresponding fee.

Highly sugared foods are not permitted to be eaten. They will be sent back home in the box.

If lunchboxes have items which need to remain cool, please use an ice pack made for this purpose in the child's lunchbox. Unfortunately we do not have room in our refrigerators for every child's lunchbox. Send all eating utensils in your child's lunchbox as needed.

Should you decide to enroll in the hot lunch program after the school year has begun, please contact the School Office. We will be unable to supply a hot lunch to children not enrolled in the hot lunch program. Should a child not enrolled in the lunch program attend school without a lunch, the school will contact the parent to provide a lunch or supply a USDA qualified lunch from snack supplies and charge the parent a corresponding fee.

Aftercare service includes a healthy afternoon snack at 3:15pm. A weekly snack menu will be posted.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Renaissance Montessori School Board of Directors is made up five members:

Community Member

Educational Director

Administrative Director

Parent Representative (rotating every 3 years)

Teacher Representative (rotating yearly)

The Board of Directors meets minimally four times per fiscal year. Meeting dates are posted in the school message cabinets outside the School Office door and the Primary Classrooms. Meetings are open to parents. If you would like to add an item to a meeting agenda, contact the school office by email.