



## Maria Montessori School 2019-2020 Parent Handbook

2021 Hawthorne Dr. Rockford, Illinois 61107  
(815)654-4906

Visit our school website at [www.rps205.com/Schools/AS/MariaMontessori](http://www.rps205.com/Schools/AS/MariaMontessori)  
Visit our principal's blog at [Mrs. Collins's Blog](#)  
Visit us on Twitter at [@CCollins\\_mont](#)

### **Principal's Message**

Dear Montessori Families,

Welcome to Maria Montessori School, home of the Mustangs! We are proud to be one of the specialty schools in Rockford Public School District 205.

Our school, which follows the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, works in partnership with our students, their families, and the community to provide a quality educational experience.

This handbook is designed to be a helpful reference for parents, so I hope you take the time to look through all of the items for your information. Should you have any questions or concerns in any area, please always feel free to call the school or send me an email. Our school phone number is 815-654-4906 and my email is [candice.collins@rps205.com](mailto:candice.collins@rps205.com).

I look forward to a wonderful school year.

Sincerely,  
Candice Collins  
Principal

## **About our School**

Maria Montessori School educates students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth. All our classroom teachers are either fully Montessori trained or are in the process of training, and each holds an Illinois teaching certificate for the grade level in which they teach. Our school holds memberships to both the American Montessori Society and the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools, which provide us with Montessori specific opportunities for staff development and school improvement.

Our students are all part of Rockford Public School District 205. They are a culturally diverse group of students who are educated in a prepared environment and based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori.

## **Mission Statement**

Collaboratively engage students in an authentic, world-class Montessori education

## **Vision**

Nurturing the mind and spirit of the child so each student becomes a self-actualized, compassionate member of society.

## **Values**

Learning ~ Respect ~ Community ~ Erdkinder ~ Independence ~ Justice ~ Peace ~ Equity

Our mission, our vision, and our 5-year Strategic Plan guide our programming for our students. It is important to us that we provide an authentic Montessori experience while meeting the mandates of a public school. Parent support is vital to our program, and we appreciate your ongoing support.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

**Arrival:** Our school day is from 9:00a.m. to 3:25 p.m. Students who ride buses will be dropped off at 8:40 a.m. in the bus zone, located in the front of the school. This zone is for **buses only** to ensure the safety of our students. Students who are transported to school by car should be dropped off in the parent drop-off zone in the circle drive located in the back of the school. Do not park in the drop-off zone, wait until it is your turn to unload your child, and do not pass another car after your child has unloaded as other students are crossing the road to enter the building. Staff members are outside to supervise drop-offs. Students should not arrive to school any earlier than 8:40 a.m. and no later than 8:55 a.m. Students who arrive after 9:00 a.m. will be marked tardy and a parent **must come into office and sign them in.** Breakfast is served beginning at 8:40 a.m. If students choose to not eat breakfast, they will go into the school to sit with their classmates before school begins.

**Dismissal:** Students who ride buses will be dismissed at 3:25 to the buses which load in the bus zone, located in the front of the building. All students who are parent pick-ups will be dismissed to the gymnasium beginning at 3:20. Again, parents do not park in the pick-up zone, but wait until it is their turn to load their child. Stay in one lane and do not pass other cars as it is a safety hazard. Parent pick-up is a smooth and quick process if all parents follow the procedures. Any changes in transportation (i.e. a bus rider is going to be picked up or a parent pick-up needs to ride the bus) must be given to the teacher in a written note so that we are aware of the change. Please do not call the office to make last minute changes unless it is an emergency. We will not permit any child to leave school with an unidentified person.

Thank you for helping us to ensure the safety of our students!

## **Absences, Attendance, and Tardiness**

It is imperative that your child attends school each day in order to learn. When students miss school, they miss out on the daily classroom experience, presentations of skills and materials, and student/teacher interaction. Please do all you can to schedule appointments outside of the regular school day. If you need to schedule an appointment during school hours, please provide a written note to your child's teacher and proof from the doctor of the appointment. The parent or authorized adult will need to come into the school to sign the child out. Do not park in the fire zone when parking; use the front visitor spots.

If your child is absent due to an illness, it is your responsibility to call the office to report the absence. Should your child become seriously ill or injured at school, we will contact you at once. If we cannot reach you, we will use the emergency contact information you have provided. It is important that we have the name and phone number for someone that will be able to come for your child if there is sickness or injury.

If your child is more than 30 minutes late to school, he/she will be counted absent for a ½ day. Please make every effort to have your child at school on time. Excessive excused absences may become unexcused absences.

## **Bus Expectations**

Students who ride the bus are expected to follow the District-Wide behavioral expectations as explained in the Student Code of Conduct: be safe, be respectful, and be responsible. Students who do not follow the rules will be subject to discipline during the school day and parent notification. Chronic bus incidents may result in mandatory Saturday safety classes or loss of bus riding privileges.

Please refer to the District's Student Code of Conduct Handbook for expected bus behavior.

## **Cell Phones and Electronics**

Students are not allowed to use or carry cell phones or electronics during the school day or while on school property. If a student has a cell phone for emergency purposes, it should be turned off and stored in the child's backpack at all times. We cannot guarantee the safety of phones, electronics, or other expensive electronics. If a student does not comply with the rules, the device will be held in the office until an adult is able to come pick it up.

## **Classroom Placement**

Montessori students are placed in multi-aged classrooms as follows:

- PreKindergarten/Kindergarten
- Grades 1, 2, and 3
- Grades 4, 5, and 6
- Grades 7 and 8

Students are placed based on multiple factors to support the best learning conditions for each child. Ultimately, the building principal makes the final determination of classroom placement.

## **Clothing**

We do not have a uniform policy. If clothing your child is wearing is causing a disruption to our learning environment, he/she will be asked to change. If alternative clothing is not available, parent/guardian will be notified to bring a change of clothes. Hats, hoods on heads, and any head covering are not allowed in school. When dressing your child, please be mindful of appropriate, safe, and comfortable clothing. Remember to dress your child according to current weather conditions, especially for recess on extremely hot or cold days. Safe shoes are a must while at school. Tennis shoes are always a safe shoe. Please avoid flip flops and high heeled shoes. We are looking to keep our students safe at all times. Tennis shoes must be worn for Physical Education Class.

## **Communications**

“Montessori Matters” is our monthly, electronic newsletter which will be emailed to families at the first of each month. Ensure you have provided us a working email. If you are not able to receive this by email, please inform the office so that a printed copy can be sent home with your child.

“Montessori Matters” updates you on events happening at our school and important school news. Please take the time to read the newsletter and stay informed on school news.

## **Discipline**

Refer to the Student Code of Conduct of the Rockford School District that was given at registration for an explanation of students’ rights and responsibilities.

### **Exit Criteria**

The Rockford Public School District has established universal exit criteria applicable to all of its alternative programs, including Montessori. The packet is available online or will be provided upon request.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

All students are eligible for a grant-funded free breakfast and lunch. Students may choose to bring their lunch from home. Please be mindful of packing nutritious and healthy food options to fuel your child's brain and body for learning. Sharing food from home is not allowable during lunch time.

Snacks and birthday treats must also be healthy choices. Your child's classroom teacher will share more about snacks within their own communication.

### **Office Hours**

The office is open from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm on school days. An answering machine is available for messages before and after office hours and at times during the school day. Please leave a detailed message and we will return your call. Do not leave a message about a change in transportation—changes are only made when you speak with someone in person.

### **Parent Teacher Organization**

The committee for Parents and Teachers is always looking for more involvement! Please become involved in the committee that plans numerous events throughout the year that are always fun! The committee meets on a monthly basis to plan events, activities and fundraisers. *ALL parents* are welcome.

### **Visitors and Volunteers**

If you plan to enter our school, you are required to check-in at the front office to secure a printed badge. You will need your state license or ID.

Our parents are committed to volunteering at least 5 hours during the school year. There is always so much to do, please ask if you need any guidance in volunteering.