



Montessori School at Five Canyons

2026/2027

PARENT
HANDBOOK

PARENT HANDBOOK

Policies and Guidelines



“Free the child’s
potential and you will
transform... the world.”
~ Maria Montessori



Montessori School at Five Canyons
22781 Canyon Court
Castro Valley, CA 94552
(510) 581-3729
www.MontessoriCastroValley.com



A proud American Montessori Society Accredited School

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Welcome to M5C!

Hello there! You're now part of our family, and we're very excited to have you in our beloved community.

The staff and administration of M5C welcomes you and your child to our school. Our Parent Handbook introduces the philosophy, the policies and the procedures of our school in order to help you understand how we like to work with you for the benefit of your child. If there are any questions we would be glad to answer them. We are looking forward to having your child with us through Kindergarten.



Our Mission

Montessori School at Five Canyons strives to provide a “Child Centered” Montessori Environment for the growth of the whole child. We accomplish this by meeting the needs of each child in a nurturing way, creating a harmonious community among children.

Our Goals

01

Love for Knowledge

We aim to present a learning-based environment where each child’s natural love for knowledge is encouraged.

02

Interconnectedness

We strive to offer an interconnected curriculum for the growth of the whole person in the areas of physical coordination, social and emotional development and where both academic triumphs and making mistakes are acknowledged as a vital part of the learning process.

03

Preparation of the Environment

We aspire to ensure a healthy, natural and beautiful environment based on the *Montessori Method*, which cherishes cultural diversity.

04

Cooperative Community

We are committed to creating a cooperative community that trusts and respects children, staff, and families.

05

Global Awareness

We nurture global awareness and encourage participation in socially responsible actions.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & FOUNDER **Meher Van Groenou**

Ms. Meher Van Groenou, M.S.W., M.A. (Education) is the Founder and Educational Director of Montessori School at Five Canyons. With more than 20 years in early childhood education, she has served as an educator, researcher, and advocate dedicated to advancing authentic Montessori education.

Her work has been published in Montessori publications, and she has contributed to the broader educational community through leadership with the American Montessori Society Teachers Research Network, county and state early childhood initiatives, and service on the Board of Golden Oak Montessori. Her leadership continues to guide the school's commitment to independence, peace education, and care for self, others, and the environment.



“Living Legacy”

AMS 2026 AWARD RECIPIENT

Ms. Van Groenou was honored with the prestigious Living Legacy Award from the American Montessori Society, a distinguished recognition awarded to individuals whose lifelong work has made a lasting impact on Montessori education.

Throughout her career, she has championed peaceful education through the founding of Montessori School at Five Canyons, the Montessori Institute for Advanced Studies, and Twin Oaks Montessori Charter School, expanding access to Montessori education and preparing future generations of educators. Her legacy continues to inspire children, families, and educators both within our school community and beyond.



OUR STAFF

M5C only hires well-qualified, experienced and nurturing staff. All of our teachers have attended some college and most hold undergraduate degrees. Additionally teachers have spent an intensive year of graduate training learning the Montessori philosophy and methods. Their AMS or AMI certificates are recognized internationally. All teacher continue their education through workshops, seminars and other continuing education programs. If you need to contact any of them, please do so using the School's email address: montessori.ins@gmail.com.

LEAD TEACHER

The Lead Teacher is responsible for leading the classroom and decision-making regarding classroom curriculum and design, parent conferences, academic evaluations, proper classroom discipline, Montessori materials, field trips, and provides direction to the assistant teacher.

INTERNS & VOLUNTEERS

Interns and Volunteers who are in a Montessori Training Program or have graduated will often intern or volunteer at M5C and are under the supervision of the Lead and assistant teacher.

DIRECTOR

The Director is responsible for the overall operations of the school. The Director of M5C is Martha Sanchez.

ASSISTANT TEACHER

The Assistant Teacher provides support to the Lead Teacher and implements decisions regarding circle planning, stories, proper classroom discipline, aesthetic touches for the classroom, rotation of classroom library books, overseeing of snack, lunch and rest time.

OFFICE MANAGER

The Office Manager handles enrollment, daily school operations & communications. The Office Manager is Nikole George.

BOARD

The Board offers input on legal and special matters.





AFFILIATION & ACCREDITATION

M5C is affiliated with the American Montessori Society. The AMS provides standards for schools and professional development. In 2020 M5C earned the prestigious American Montessori Society Accredited School designation. We are so proud to be one of the very few schools to have received this high honor.

The Environment



As you enter the driveway, a soothing sound of the fountain and a garden of flowers and shrubs welcome you. You enter the School through a sun-lit atrium with live birds and plants and the sounds of nature.

The school building and the outdoors have been specifically designed for young learners. Their health and safety are our main concern. The classrooms are large with many windows allowing natural sunlight in and to assure good ventilation.

Each classroom is equipped with child-sized furniture, toilets and sinks. Low shelves display rich learning activities and Montessori didactic materials.



The classrooms are arranged in five sections around a circle. The children begin the day around the circle and again, end the day together in this center. The children choose their activities from one of the five areas. The flow of activities are distributed evenly. There is a peacefulness to the classroom. Teachers move quietly through the child-world, working with individual children or in groups, remaining aware of each child and assisting them according to their need.

Programs Offered

M5C serves children from 18 months – 6 years old using Montessori principles and other innovative teacher practices. We offer 3 different programs, Toddler (18 months to 3 years old and in diapers), Preschool (3+ and potty-trained), TK & Kindergarten. The timings are as follows:

3-HOURS

Morning

8:30 - 11:30

9:00 - 12:00

6-HOURS

Extended Day

8:30 - 2:30

9:00 - 5:00

9-HOURS

Full Time

7:00 - 4:00

8:50 - 5:50

**We open at 7:00am and close at 5:50pm. Any 9-hour timeframe can be configured.*



AFTERNOON

Kindergarten Only

12:00 - 3:00

12:00 - 5:50

What is Montessori Education?

Montessori education is based on the principle that a child learns best when the social environment supports its unique development.

For this purpose, Dr. Montessori create a curriculum and learning material that provide experiences contributing to the growth of independent learners.

A Montessori classroom is multi-aged. A heterogeneous group of children work in an atmosphere of cooperative learning, developing a peaceful classroom community. Respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment governs the learning community.

Who is Maria Montessori?

Maria Montessori was born in 1870 in Italy. She was the first woman to receive a medical degree from an Italian university. At the turn of the century, Dr. Montessori, a devotee of the scientific method in inquiry, undertook, the careful observation of children, experimenting with different materials and teaching methods.

Her success with these experiments led to the worldwide movement to establish Montessori schools. By the time of her death in 1952 at the age of 82, she had traveled to many countries and she had trained teachers from all parts of the world. Her theories have been set forth in a dozen of books. One hundred years later, Montessori education has endured trends and has thrived and been adopted in continents around the world.

“... education is not something which the teacher does, but... a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in the virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher’s task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.”

~ *Maria Montessori*



Elements of Montessori Education

Montessori education is a philosophy of human development and a fundamental basis for directing such development. The elements of Montessori education include:

A prepared environment

- One in which a student can develop abilities and strengthen areas of challenge
- Strengths are matched via the curriculum and community opportunities
- Areas of improvement are identified and given individual focus
- One which promotes individual success
- Materials designed for individual lessons
- An individualized curriculum, meeting students in their academic 'place'
- Self-correcting materials, including self-correcting ungraded assignments
- Continual refinement of skills, through repetition and gradual intensity in which classes are interdependent
- Preschoolers may share information with older ones
- Older students share presentations or read to younger ones

Self-Development of the Child

- Peer instruction to challenge and develop leadership skills
- Academic success teams form during the year for special projects
- Practical life education prepares students for life, from pouring exercises, to repair, laundry and practical skills
- Individual education and development plan is created for each student

Concrete Educational Materials

- Non-frustrating, self-correcting living educational materials are a trademark of a Montessori environment
- Such concrete learning is not replaced by massive textbooks and dittoes
- Materials are multi-leveled, to allow for repetition and challenge
- Concrete education also includes community involvement and assistance



The Montessori Teacher

- Is a facilitator, who directs the child toward self-learning
- Is the link between the student and the learning environment
- Directs the activity and the motivation of the student toward the accomplishment of his or her goals
- Seeks not to make every child a genius, but to enable every student to develop their own capabilities to their fullest potential

M5C Philosophy

The Montessori School at Five Canyons offers an educational environment of early childhood in which each child is encouraged to develop their total personality at the own pace. In this way the foundation is laid for life-long learning. The learning community that we create is guided by respect for each individual and our responsibility for the environment.

Based on the principles of Montessori education model, it is our belief as Montessori educators that if “the child” is encouraged to develop along their natural path, they will grow to be a more positive adult with the capacity to create a kinder, more positive humanity. Through her extensive study, Dr. Maria Montessori discovered that there is universality to all children, no matter their culture, country, language, race or socio-economic status.

Inclusion

As advocates of the child and family, we recognize the importance of supporting the changing definition of family. M5C is home to families of all compositions: single-parent households, same-gender households, biracial households, and traditional nuclear households are just some of the many different families that we welcome into our community. We are proud of the diversity of our school, which manifests itself in a complement of ethnicities, family compositions, ages, sexual orientations and personal beliefs.

Cultural Studies & Connection to the World

Our policies regarding cultural studies and holidays are designed to reflect a spirit of inclusion and diversity and something Montessori called Education for Peace. It is our hope to build communities of children who will practice peace, understanding and tolerance, which will break down barriers of injustice and support connection to the world.

Curriculum

Community & Cultural Curriculum

The community involvement curriculum includes; cooking, gardening, art, music, and movement. The children will use those talents and the education derived from the classroom to learn about their community and their world. This understanding will include sharing themselves through music or gifts with others around them. In addition, it shows itself in the classroom in these ways:

Tone of the environment

A Montessori classroom, while busy, is also generally a calm and orderly atmosphere.

Slowing down of classroom life

Taking time to watch chicks being born, watch the journey of an ant, to hear the differing sounds of tiny bells, or to enjoy the repetition of a pouring exercise; meditative thoughts about those we love; carrying things one at a time; quiet exercises; gardening; working on a rug.

Respect for the earth

An attention to enjoying less, using more of what is available, and preserving, growing and harvesting

Gentleness of the teacher

Quiet music; eye contact; speaking from the child's level; patience. The cultural curriculum is one that is ongoing throughout the school year, in which we focus on a different continent each month, highlighting specific countries. When we feel that there is an especially pressing topic that should be addressed, we add it to our cultural curriculum as well.

Development of care for living and non-living things

Cleaning the leaves of plants; mending a torn book; stopping when someone is hurt; returning materials and furniture as one found them; beauty in the environment.

Occasionally, a teacher will request items for cultural study or other classroom interests. The teacher will provide information about these items, when needed. Please send them labeled, and take them home when the sharing for that unit of study has been completed.

The Teacher's Role

At M5C, we expect our teachers to come to know their students academically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. We feel that smaller class sizes enable us to accomplish this. In addition:

- We cultivate our children in becoming more independent; nurturing the child's ability to taking care of their own physical needs as well as becoming able to work/think more independently.
- Teachers support a child's love of learning by guiding them to work and study at their own pace.
- By providing a safe environment, the staff creates a consistent nurturing school community for the children.
- We instill confidence in children by encouraging them to accept responsibilities and follow direction.



Assessments

All potential students are individually assessed. Following enrollment, the teacher continually assesses and monitors their progress. They prepare materials or exercises that match either the child's areas of strength or areas of improvement.

We invite parents to learn about their child's developmental needs by encouraging parent-teacher partnerships. M5C has an ongoing assessment process for enrolled children, which involves parents:

TEACHER ASSESSMENTS

Teachers maintain observation sheets, noting materials children have been working on any changes in behavior. These are maintained over the course of the school year and are referred to during teacher – parent conferences.

CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS

These are created each semester, and reflect written information concerning a child's academic and socio-emotional progress in school, including peer and adult interaction.

BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT

Form is used when behavior is of concern to the parent or teacher, and provides possible indicators which affect a child's behavioral change over the course of a day.

SCORING

The Montessori Assessment and Progress reflect a 3-level scoring process:

1. Beginning/Needs Attention: student has begun exposure to the skill or concept
2. Working on/Developing: the skill or concept is neither at the beginning stage, nor at a place of mastery, but the student is working on this skill
3. Mastery: Child is proficient with the concept or skill

MONTESSORI ASSESSMENT

Teacher maintains a multi-part form which tracks the child's academic progress over the course of the school year. This is referred to during parent – teacher conferences, and used for reference in preparing progress reports.

PROGRESS REPORTS

These tri-semester evaluations are provided to parents in a numbered format, and indicate both academic progress and socio-emotional development.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences are used as a guide for discussion of assessments.

**Note:* All student information is kept confidential. Children's files are available to the parent, school personnel and state representatives.



Admissions & Continuous Enrollment

Determination & Process

Students are received on a first come, first served basis. Parents interested in enrolling in the school should first observe the classroom by attending a formal tour with the Director, to assess their comfort level with the program and the environment. Once enrolled, we presume that your child will remain at M5C through Kindergarten. However, a re-enrollment process occurs prior to every school-year in order to maintain current child records. If you must withdraw, a 30-day notice is required. (See the Withdrawal section for further details.)

Spring Enrollment Process

Applications for the next school year are made available during the month of February and an Early Bird Special is available to returning families – a 10 percent discount on the first fall installment.

Separation / Transition

Upon enrollment, parents should work with the school to achieve a successful separation from their child. Parents should plan to remain on the school grounds until their child feels safe enough for them to leave, unless other arrangements were discussed with the Director or teacher.

Standard enrollment requests are processed first, on a space available basis. Special schedule requests are processed second, determined by whether there is another family in the school with a request which offsets it. All other applications are placed on a waiting list.

Parents who enroll following the enrollment period are placed as space available, or placed on a waiting list. Waitlist priority will be given to current M5C parents. The waiting list does not guarantee a space. Acceptance letters will be mailed out thereafter.

Enrollment Appointment

Upon a successful tour and observation, parents should fill out an enrollment or waiting list application, depending on space availability. Parent and student will be invited back to school for an enrollment appointment with the Operations Manager. Following the enrollment appointment parents will receive an emailed transition letter confirming your child's transition schedule which **MUST** be adhered to. Parents must provide the school with immunization information, medical assessment, and completed informational and emergency forms prior to but no later than the child's start date. If these licensing forms are not fully completed and returned, your child will not be admitted.



Re-Enrollment

In mid-July, parents will receive a packet of enrollment forms. Parents will need to complete all forms prior to the start of school. Enrollment is not complete until school administration receives and reviews your forms. You must provide the school with full information on pick-up persons, the name and address of a doctor and dentist in case of emergency and full information regarding your child's medical needs and the parent's emergency wishes. It is imperative that we have updated information, in case we need to contact you. Please provide any changes in writing or by email as soon as they occur.

If re-enrolled after April 1. After April 1, enrollment is open to the general public. The enrollment procedure is first come, first serve - parents who enroll earliest will receive the first available spaces. Siblings of enrolled students are processed at the same time.

Behavior

All families are enrolled with the understanding that no environment is perfect for every child or parent. During the first four weeks of school, the teacher and/or the Director will assess any child who is having a difficulty with the environment, to determine whether M5C's environment is best suited for the child. Should any concern arise regarding the appropriateness of a child's placement, the parents will be contacted for a meeting.

Behaviors directed toward students or teachers that cause concern include: any type of physical violence or verbal disrespect.

Students displaying continued behavioral difficulties will be monitored, provided with required parental meetings and the development and implementation of a behavioral plan, along with possible outside intervention (at the parent's cost) by a behavioral specialist. Students whose continual problematic behavior or families, whose personal views do not coincide with the behavioral policy of M5C, should not continue enrollment with the school.

Accordingly, M5C does not permit violent toys, violent play or actions, and super hero fantasy. This view reflects our strong feelings that M5C be a school that promotes and pursues peace. We discourage character clothing in general, as children often act out in character and we encourage promotion of self.



MEMBER ~ 2026

“

*“Education is the best
weapon for peace.”*

~ Maria Montessori

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Trial Period

The initial 1 month of school is an adjustment period during which time, a child's placement in school will be assessed by a teacher and/or director. If teachers have a concern, the director will follow up with additional assessment.

The director and teacher will then meet with the parent to discuss the concern to set up a plan of action for the benefit of the child. A timeline for progress, assessment, and additional intervention is drawn up and agreed upon. It is possible that additional outside assessment will be requested, at cost to the parent.

M5C also reserves the right to terminate enrollment, should the behavior of a child or parent cause undue harm to the school community, or if it is determined that the school is unable to meet the student or family needs. Such notice will be discussed with the family and provided in writing. If it becomes necessary for the school to request withdrawal of a child from the school, or in case the child is not adjusting with mutual consent of the parent and the school administration, the requirement of 30-day notice is waived. All fees (application, book/materials and work commitment fees) are **non-refundable**.

School Procedures

Arrival

M5C is located within a residential area. This means that the school operates with a use permit, which gives neighbors the right to give input to the city, if their rights as residents are being violated.

We are required to monitor the neighborhood courtesy of our parents and staff when arriving and departing from school. It is important that:

- Cars never park in or block the driveway of neighbors
- Cars are never double-parked
- Entrances and exits are made safely
- Young children are not left unattended in cars
- Personal arguments do not occur outside of the school
- Individuals do not gather in clusters in front of a neighbor's home
- When arriving or departing with a child, parents maintain responsibility for the child's behavior and safety, which includes holding the child's hand during the walk from the building to the car



Safety Procedure Rules for Arrival / Parking

- Parents should park, pulling up as far as possible in the driveway or parking lot. If you fear you will be late while waiting for others to leave, you should find street parking, rather than in the driveway. NEVER leave your car unattended in the driveway - this blocks the flow of traffic and creates an unsafe environment for pedestrians and other vehicles.
- Please be present with your young child while in the parking lot (hold their hand)
- Look for walkers and bicyclists in the driveway and parking lot.
- Children who travel to school on bicycles must wear helmets.
- Exit the driveway, parking lot or curb slowly, as others may be entering the driveway unexpectedly.

Departure and Valet Service

M5C offers a convenient valet service during the school year for parents whose child is at least 2 years old. A staff member is available to bring the sign in/out binder you for signature and accompany or supervise the child inside. Valet service is only available in the M5C driveway and during these hours:

8:50 am – 9:10am Morning (for 9 o'clockers)

11:50 am – 12:10 Lunch (for 12 o'clockers)

2:50 – 3:10 pm Afternoon (for 3 o'clockers)

Anyone arriving or departing outside the hours noted above should follow the arrival process outlined above.

Signing In/Out

The State of California requires that all preschool children are signed in at arrival, and signed out upon departure. The combination of sign-in logs and attendance books are used in the event of fire or earthquake. Please be sure to sign your child in and out each day using Brightwheel, which identifies your signature with your unique code. You must use your unique code provided by Brightwheel. Please do not share your code.



Designating a Person to Pick up Your Child

All persons authorized to pick up your child from M5C must be listed by name on the form you submitted upon enrollment. An "Authorization to Pick-Up" form is also available in the office for any additions. In addition, parents must assign any designated pick up person to Brightwheel and the designated person must sign-up for Brightwheel as their unique code is their legal signature. Please be sure to communicate this policy to anyone who will be taking your child to/from school.

Requesting identification is for the protection of your child. Even if you know the teacher or administrator, please be forgiving if the teacher or administrator forgets your face and requests identification. Make others aware that they may be asked also.

- If you wish your child to be dismissed to an adult other than one who was previously authorized in writing, you must provide the office with a written, dated, signed note. In the event of an unforeseen emergency, the office will accept a telephone call with a complete description of the driver.
- We prefer that such notes are delivered directly to the office or given to the teacher at arrival time. Should the note accompany the undesignated driver, parents should call ahead for verification.
- Apart from unforeseen emergencies, a change in designated driver should be handled clearly and **before** dismissal time.

Attendance / Absences

Regular attendance is important for your child's classroom learning and social interactions. Please make every effort to see that your child attends regularly and plan family trips during school break times. If your child is going to be absent, please call the office by 9:30am so that we may inform the teachers.

Late Arrival / Early Pick-Up

There is a 10-minute grace period in which we allow, however we encourage everyone to arrive on time and keep to their enrolled schedule. If you plan to pick-up early because of an appointment, please let the office know so that we can notify your child's teacher and have your child prepared and ready.

Snack

Snack is available to children during the morning and afternoon. M5C provides a nut-free snack calendar assigning a child to bring a snack once in the month for their child's entire class (approx. 24 children). Children are encouraged to finish uneaten lunch items before eating afternoon snack. Snack menus are posted in the classroom, on the podium and on Brightwheel under the "documents" section.

We recommend healthful snack ideas representing three different food groups. Food is served and stored appropriately. All communal snacks are nut-free.

Parents are asked to provide nut-free snacks from 2 of these groups:

- Fresh (cut-up) fruit
- Unsweetened apple sauce, low sugar yogurt
- Whole grain crackers or breads
- Cheese (string, cubes, sliced, baby-bells)
- Vegetables (edamame, cut-up carrots, celery, etc.)



Lunchtime

Children bring their own prepared lunches and full water bottle, in appropriate (heat or cold) labeled, food containers. Parents should provide nutritious lunches (free of non-nutritional food and drinks with high fructose and empty calories). We recommend parents follow USDA Food Guidelines when preparing their lunch (www.myplate.gov). Candy, cookies, or chocolate bars are not allowed at school. Unacceptable lunch items will be left in the lunchbox to go home. We encourage parents to carefully consider and discuss nutritious lunches with their child. Parents, please educate your child on items they are allergic to.

After table setting, students will be asked to remove their lunch and place their food items on a plate. Teachers will sit with the children, encouraging them to eat their protein first and modeling table manners. Generally children are asked to finish what is left of their lunch as afternoon snack before offering them a school snack.

Food sharing is not allowed for hygiene reasons and food allergies.

Rest and Quiet Time

All children under the age of 4.5 must be given the opportunity to nap or rest without distraction. No child is forced to sleep or stay awake. However, children must be able to stay in the nap area and quietly rest, look at a book, or otherwise not disturb other children who are sleeping. If a child under the age of 5 cannot quietly remain in the nap area, they are welcome to join the morning program that ends at noon.



Schedule of the Day

Below is a sample of a typical schedule. Class schedules reflect the needs of the students, the school curriculum, parent participation and extracurricular activities. If you would like to know the class schedule more specific to your child's classroom, please speak to the Director.

All students under the age of 24 months must be picked up by 3 pm. All students under the age of 36 months must be picked up by 5 pm.

Morning

7:00-8:30	Daycare (free choice)
9:00-10:00	Class time
10:00-11:00	Snack & Morning activities (dancing, singing, story time)
11:00-12:30	Playground & Lunch time

Afternoon

12:30-2:30	Rest & Quiet time
2:00-3:00	Snack & Playground time
3:00-5:00	Afternoon work time (gardening, art, sports)
5:00-5:50	Daycare (free choice)

Pickup Times

11:30 & 12:00	3-Hour Program
2:30 & 3:00	6-Hour Program – extended day
5:00 & 5:50	9-Hour Program – full time

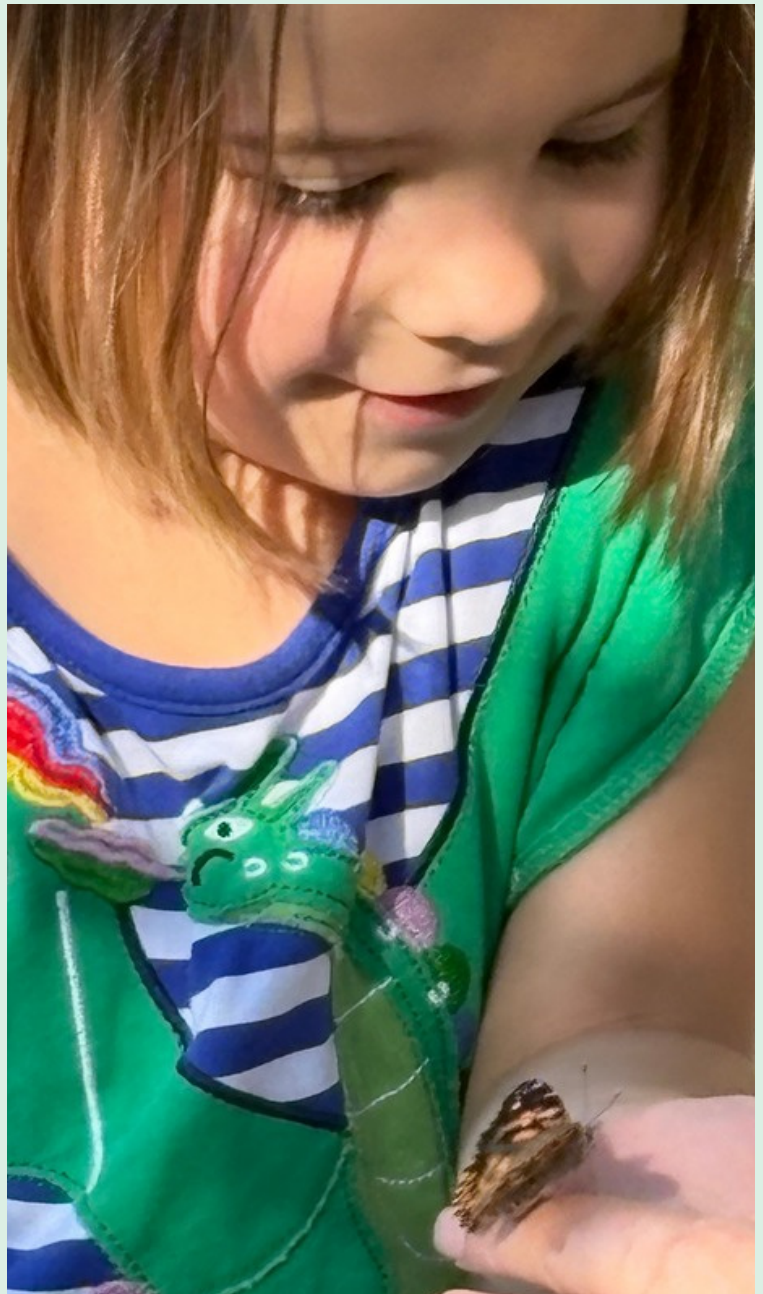
Field Trips

Field trips are planned for educational and/or cultural value, and as a means to achieve specific objectives. Field trips will be scheduled in advance; however, should an opportunity arises, short notice may be provided for special or unexpected opportunities. School permission forms must be on file at school for each student prior to the class' departure on a field trip.

Field trips with older children may be driving trips necessitating parent drivers to volunteer. Parents driving to and from field trip locations must have a current, valid California driver's license, be 21 years of age or older, have automobile insurance with minimum liability limits of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident and \$50,000 property damage, and a seat belt to accommodate each student. A copy of your insurance policy is required.

The law requires car seats when transporting younger children under 40 pounds. A booster seat is required for any child under 40 pounds, less than 8 years of age and under 4'9". Please be sure to provide a car or booster seat for your child on field trip days if you are not driving.

The parent's role in the field trip activities is one of assisting in supervision and driving. Drivers should adhere to scheduled itinerary, making no special stops with their group. Also, siblings not enrolled at M5C are not allowed to join us. Chaperone volunteers need to provide their full attention to M5C children.



The Student



Birthdays

M5C honors a child's birthday with a "Celebration of Life" (the details of which are located under the "Resources" section in the Parent Portal.) Your child's teacher may also provide you with a printed sheet of the process and the parent involvement (also located on Brightwheel under the documents section. Parents are requested not to bring celebration snacks to school. Please check with your child's teacher prior to bringing any food to class since it can be a disruption and children in the classroom may have food allergies.

Of course parents may need or choose to limit the number of students who attend a personal festivity for their child outside of school. It is important that the feelings of all children at school are not injured in any way as a result of such understandable and necessary decisions. Gifts should remain family matters, and should not come to school.



Share (“Show & Tell”)

Because we do not allow toys to be brought to school in general, most classes participate in a show and tell on Friday morning. We encourage children to share something they made, or a photo of a place they have visited or tell a short story of someone or something that they found of particular interest. In the event of a daily schedule change (ie., special event), share day may be delayed.

Personal Belongings

Please do not bring your child’s inseparable items; these precious items should remain at home, along with toys. Please discuss this with your child in advance, assuring your child that toys will be safe at home. Let your child know that other special materials and work are at school for his/her enjoyment. If a toy is brought to school, we may hold it for your child until they leave for the day. This way, children do not squabble over it, or take the chance of having the item misplaced or broken. We are not responsible for lost toys.

Indoor shoes

Children at M5C are free to work on the carpet / rug in the classrooms. Carpets and rugs are washed often for cleanliness, but additionally we ask that children bring indoor shoes to wear in the classroom. Easy slip on shoes are recommended (i.e., crocs or slippers). Children change into their outdoor shoes when they go to the playground or participate in other outdoor activities.

Nap Bedding

If your child stays for nap (12:30 – 2:30pm), each child is given their own mat to use at rest period and is kept in their labeled nap cubby. Please bring a small, light blanket and fitted crib sheets (fit perfectly on these mats) for rest time. We have limited space in the nap cubbies, so no pillows or stuffed animals please. Bedding is sent home every Friday for laundering and should be returned Monday in a bag with your child’s name on it.

Any personal belongings should be **labeled** (i.e., sweaters, jackets, hats). We encourage small backpacks because work only comes home once per week, along with their bedding for washing, if applicable. Please check for any lost items at the end of your child's week at school. Unclaimed lost and found items will be donated at the end of each month to a charity.

School Policies

Parent Work Commitment/ Volunteer hours

No school is able to function effectively on tuition alone. In October, we pre-charge \$200 for the Parent Work Commitment. Therefore, parents are required to provide support for the school, by volunteering a minimum number of 6 hours each year, per child. Parents must fulfill this requirement themselves (no other family members.)

We offer many opportunities within the school-year to volunteer your time. For example, we hold two Parent Work Parties on the weekend, weeknight events, classroom assistance and field trip chaperoning. If you volunteer your time for classroom projects, etc. it is your responsibility to track that time in writing, have the teacher sign-off on it and provide the office with the a copy.

The work commitment is not meant to be a chore; it is meant to be an important part of the life of your child's school. Volunteer hours tell your child that you value their world and wish to contribute to its/their well-being. If however, you are unable to fulfill your 6-hour requirement by the end of the school-year, you will forfeit your \$200 pre-charge. Work commitment reimbursements are processed at the end of the school-year/early summer. Upon request, you can roll-over this pre-charge to the next school-year.



Parent Observations & Parent-Teacher Conferences

Class Observation and Parent - Teacher conferences occur in the fall and spring. Check your annual calendar for specific dates. Sign-ups will be available. It is the parent's responsibility to sign-up for the dates and times that are most convenient for you within the timeframe provided. Parents, teachers, or a school administrator may also request a conference at any time.

In-class observations are limited to a maximum of two parents daily, and should be arranged in the office. This observation is to provide parents with an in-depth look at their child's operation in class. Parents, who observe, therefore, should not engage in play and conversations with the other children.

General Observation Guidelines

- Avoid excessive talking
- Please observe without other siblings, if possible
- If an infant accompanies you, please leave if crying occurs
- Save questions until later. Leave a note, or request a call via the office.
- If your child has great difficulty interacting in class in your presence, we may ask you to observe from a distance, to ease in over a period of time, or to not participate in 'in-class' events until it becomes comfortable.



Use of a Student's Image

Current technology and social media has become a commonly used form of communication in our society. We therefore address technology and social media in the policies of M5C.

Throughout the year, M5C will take photos or videos during special events and when students are engaged in inside/outside activities. These photos/videos may be used for the purpose of education and promotion of M5C. Receipt of your authorization to use photos was obtained at time of enrollment and may be used on the school website, parent portal, newsletter, promotional materials, or outside publications. Personal information such as name, address, and telephone number will not be published. An Opt Out Photo form is available on the parent portal.

Parents who do not wish their child to be photographed at events should keep in mind that others may take friendly photos/videos of performances/events. M5C cannot control or be held responsible for the actions of others. Additionally, we ask parents who take photos/videos to keep the safety of children in mind (eg: including names of children with photos).

Change in Hours

A 30-day written request for any change in schedule after enrollment is subject to a \$25 change fee. If your request can be accommodated, the change in tuition will be effective the following month.

Early Withdrawal

When enrolling in M5C, it is understood that you are enrolling your child through Kindergarten (however, we do have a re-enrollment process after every school-year). Parents choosing to withdraw their child must provide the school with thirty days' written notification and pay tuition during this period. Tuition will be prorated for the school days attended, excluding the first, non-refundable payment. Please refer to the tuition schedule provided to you in the Admission Packet and available on the parent portal.

Grounds for Dismissal:

M5C Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss a family for the following reasons:

- Failure of the family to follow an agreed upon behavioral plan of action
- Falsification of the child's age
- Continual behavioral difficulties, following implementation of behavioral action plan and target deadlines
- Serious slanderous or inappropriate parental behavior, after intervention and agreement of correction
- Failure to comply with the Basic Policies or Admissions Agreement of the school
- Failure to pay tuition and fees and/or set up an approved payment plan with the Director

Tuition

Monthly Installments

Monthly tuition installments are due by the 1st day of the month.

1. Tuition is determined according to the number of open school days.
2. Each installment is of an equal amount, and is not reduced for holidays, illness, absence, vacations, teacher training days, minimum days or school closure.
3. Tuition payments have a five-day grace period and will be charged a \$10.00 late fee at close of day, on the fifth of each month.
4. Tuition may be paid by check, cash, cashier's check/money orders, or online using Brightwheel.

Late Tuition

Tuition is delinquent after the 5th of the month and a late fee of \$10 will be charged. After the 10th, a late charge of \$20 is applied and payment is required in cash or money order. Thereafter a 10% late fee on the unpaid amount is charged.

Fees

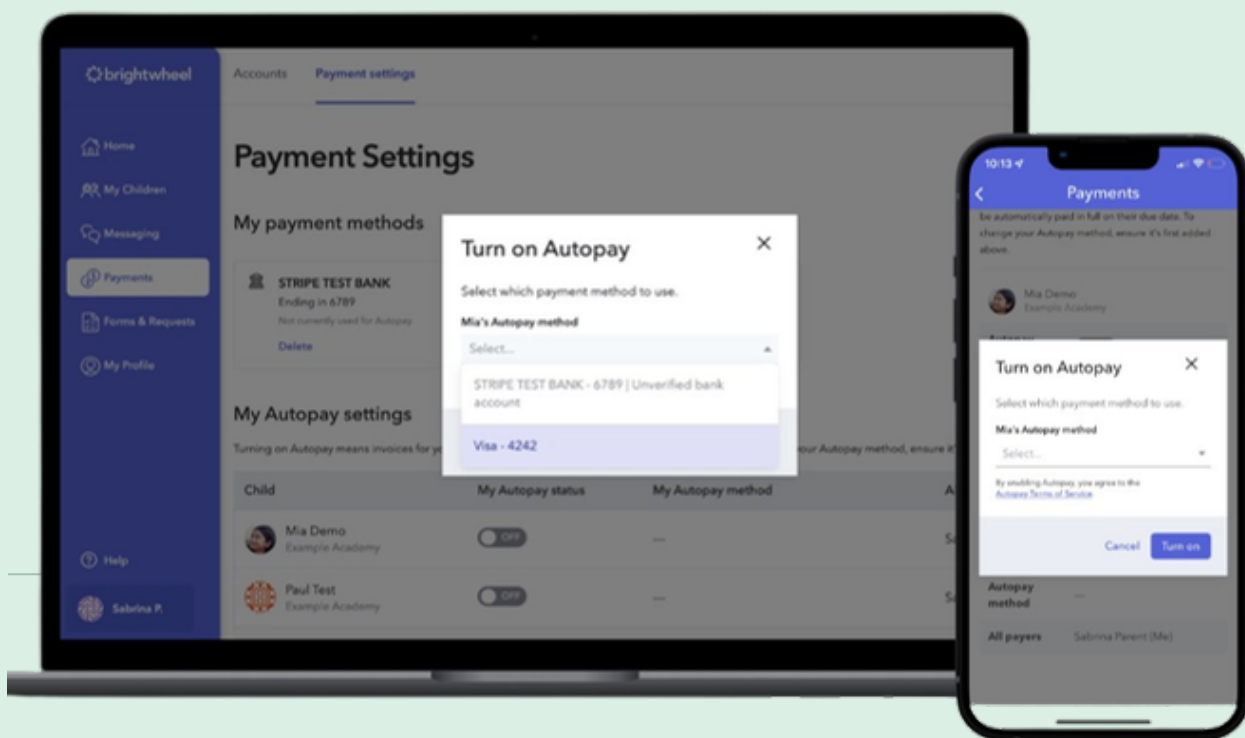
Application: \$150 one time, non-refundable
Book and Materials: \$250 per academic year, due in September 1 (not pro-rated or refundable)

Work Commitment: (pre-charge): \$200 per academic year, due in October and returned in June if 6-hour work commitment is fulfilled (not pro-rated)

Daycare: We do not offer drop-in daycare. If you have an occasional special request for additional daycare outside your normal timings, we will try to accommodate that. Daycare charges are \$15 per hour and requires prior approval from the Office. All other late pick-up or early drop-offs beyond your timeslot or after 5:50pm will be charged at \$1 per minute. Last pick-up is at 5:50pm.

Tuition Discounts

- If tuition is paid in one installment by August 1, a 5% discount on the total tuition is offered (not including books/materials fee or work commitment pre-charge).
- A 10% discount off the oldest child's tuition is offered for siblings.



Health and Safety Policies & Procedures

Health Absences and Re-Admission

Please remember that for the health of all children, and for the continued health and happiness of your child, NEVER send your child to school when s/he is contagious or ill, listless or has had a fever within 24 hours.

If your child is unable to function at home, but has no clear diagnosis of illness, it is always best to keep your child home. Children should come to school ready to work - physically and emotionally. Children who appear ill or symptomatic may be refused at the door.

Student Medical Conditions

We encourage parents to be clear with the school regarding any health issues which may affect your child. For the best possible consistent awareness and intervention, provide clear information in written form to be read by the Administrator, Site Directors and Teachers.

Keep the school abreast of any changes in your child's medical condition, including allergies.

If your child is able to attend school, but is having a bad day due to a medical problem, please let us know at the beginning of your child's day.

Arrival/Health Screening

The state of California requires that M5C staff create and implement a daily process, which will:

- quickly examine the health readiness of each arriving student
- refuse to admit any child with contagious symptoms
- ensure that parents sign each child in and out
- ensure that parents provide their legal signature
- Ensure that only designated individuals pick children up from school

Teachers are trained to carry out an entrance health screening within seconds, during morning greeting. **If a teacher determines that a child is too ill to remain at school, the teacher will refuse admittance and request that the child return home. Please be aware that this is a state requirement, to minimize unnecessary spread of infection at school.**

Notification Regarding Contagious Symptomatology

It is imperative that we know as soon as possible if your child develops symptoms that are indications of, or may lead to the spread of infection. Please keep your child home, and contact us, should your child develop any of the following:

- fever
- symptoms of an obvious contagious disease ('pink eye', head lice, etc)
- extreme listlessness
- open lesions, which cannot be covered (serious burn, etc)
- yellow or green mucous from the nose (non-allergy related)
- common cold symptoms (during the first 36 hours of a cold)

Elements of Contagious Disease Notification

Should your child become ill due to a contagious disease, we will need the following information:

- nature of the illness
- when your child was exposed (if you know)
- the first sign of symptoms (beginning of fever, etc)
- when any appropriate medication began

Re-Admission

Children may return to school, following an illness, when:

- they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine
- they have passed the first 36 hours of a cold
- when a contagious disease has subsided, with no symptoms, i.e., Chicken pox (blisters dry and scabbed)
- when medication for certain diseases has been in a child's system for 24 hours, i.e., Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- when medication has been taken for a number of days, AND symptoms are gone, i.e. strep throat, other antibiotic-treated types of illness, or head lice (no nits on hair shaft)

Medication

M5C will dispense medication on site. However, the state of California and/or school policy, require the following procedure:

- All medications must be in their ORIGINAL container
- Parents must give medication directly to the Teacher or Site Director
- Please provide NO MORE than one day's dosage in the original container
- Parent must fill out a Medication Dispense form daily to have medication administered, unless it involves an ongoing prescription.

Non-Prescription Medication

We do not administer non-prescription medication unless it is accompanied by a signed doctor's note. The note may be a one-time authorization of nonprescription medication for the school year, covering such illnesses as colds or basic recurrent problems. All non-prescription medication must arrive with the directions for administration. Parent must fill out a Medication Dispense form daily to have medication administered. Additionally, we should see the following information:

- diagnosis for the medication
- medication schedule
- possible effects to look for

Prescription Medication

Prescription medications should have a medication schedule and possible side effects, on the original container. A physician's note should accompany the medication, detailing such information. ***THIS INCLUDES EPI-PENS. EPI PENS MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL BOX.***

Parents must sign information daily to have medication administered, unless it involves an ongoing prescription. Teachers must log the administration of any medication, detailing the date and time given.

Parents who wish confidentiality maintained regarding the type of medication their child receives must discuss this matter with the Administrator.

Medical and Dental Emergencies

In the case of a medical or dental emergency, parents will be contacted using current information on the Daily Release and then the Emergency Release form.

For medical emergencies, the staff will call 911. If a child needs to be taken to the hospital before a parent can arrive, s/he will be transported by staff vehicle (minor injury) or ambulance to the hospital first. Paramedics determine the hospital based on the severity/illness of the child. If a parent requests a specific hospital, staff will inform paramedics however, they may determine that the child can only be transferred after first being taken to the nearest hospital and assessed first. Medical Restriction/Authorization form, medical waiver, and any medical instructions will accompany the child, so that parental restrictions can be noted and adhered to by medical/hospital personnel.

For dental emergencies, the dentist will be contacted, and in case of immediate emergency, the child will be transported by a staff member with first aid training via the instructions of the dentist, unless parent information directs otherwise.

Sunscreen Policy

We encourage the use of UVB/UVA sunscreen products with an SPF of at least 30, and has one of the top two ratings with the Environmental Working Group's annual sunscreen guide (www.ewg.org/sunscreen). During the summer months especially, we ask that you apply sunscreen to your child before they come to school. Sunscreen should be applied to exposed skin, including but not limited to the face, tops of ears, nose, and bare shoulders, arms, and legs. If your child stays after 12noon, in order to have a M5C staff member re-apply sunscreen in the afternoon, parents must: 1) Complete the Consent to Administer Medication form which can be obtained from the Office or on the Parent Portal under Forms) and provide it to your child's teacher; 2) provide sunscreen in its original packaging and your child's first and last name clearly labeled on it.

Diapering & Diaper Cream Authorization

Parents are responsible from bringing diapers and wipes, labeled with their child's name. M5C will use only commercially available disposable diapers unless a child has a medical reason that does not permit their use. If a medical reason exists, a note detailing the reason must be provided and parents must provide the diapers. We will apply diaper cream if it is supplied by the parent and the authorization form is completed and returned to the office.

Diaper changing logs are located in the Lily, Tulip and Rose rooms near the changing station. This log is used by staff to reflect times when children have been changed and by whom. The diaper log is available to parents by request.

Diaper charges cease after the first full month in which your child has become toilet trained and the child has turned 3 years old. It is your responsibility to notify the Office when this occurs so the billing rate can change from the toddler rate to the preschool rate.

- All medications must be in their ORIGINAL container
- Parents must give medication directly to the Teacher or Site Director
- Please provide NO MORE than one day's dosage in the original container
- Parent must fill out a Medication Dispense form daily to have medication administered, unless it involves an ongoing prescription.

Safety & Emergency Protocols

An Emergency and disaster plan is posted outside the office. We also have emergency supplies located off premises – but accessible.

We have monthly drills, alternating between fire and earthquake drills. A first aid kit resides in every classroom for all classroom use.

In case of earthquake, fire or other emergencies, your child will be kept with adults on the school grounds until you arrive. If authorities advise us to move children be moved to other locations, signs will be posted on or near the premises and if communication systems are available we will contact parents directly.

School Closures

School will be closed for holidays, certain conferences and teacher work days. Please refer to your annual calendar or the school website for specific dates each year. As tuition is based on the days that school is in session, there is no deduction in tuition for these days. Tuition is not paid for school months, but reflects one total for the number of days when school is in session – divided into ten installments. Regardless of the number of days when school is open during the school year, the tuition installment remains that same, as it reflects one annual amount. If school is closed on a day your child attends school, you may not exchange it for another day. We encourage your positive support of teacher training/professional development day, as continued education is for the benefit of your child.

Power Outages

These protocols are most specific to the Public Safety Power Shutoff advisories from PG& E, however they could apply to any gusty winds, dry condition, combined with heightened fire risk which could cause a power outage.

Planned Power Outages

- If the school is notified of a planned power outage, (typically we will receive a 48 hour notice) we will notify M5Cs families of such outage, but you should plan on the school remaining OPEN during the notice. However, you should make plans in the event the school is closed and your work may be open.
- If the school's power is turned off as planned: we will notify M5C families as soon as we are notified via Brightwheel.
- If the power is off, M5C will not open and therefore you should not bring your child to school.

Unplanned Power Outages

- If the power goes out while the school is in operation, we will notify parents via phone that we have lost power and ask that you make arrangements to pick your child up within the hour.

Air Quality Alerts:

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) often issues AC Alerts (Alameda County) announcing spare the air advisories. The mixture of high temperatures and smoke can initiate an air quality alert. If the air quality index level reaches an "unhealthy" level based on the recommendation of BAAQMD*, M5C will keep the children indoors with interior circulated air. Please ensure you have notified the school if your child has asthma or other air sensitivities. Also, if the temperatures reach high temperatures, we will shorten the outdoor time and move activities indoors.

Resource: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/>*

Power Outages Resources

Our last resort is to close the school. But the best safeguard for your family is to have a plan in the event of an extended school closure:

- Refer to the PG&E website for up to date information: <https://www.pge.com/>
- Talk to your medical provider about a power outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity and refrigerated medicines. Plan for batteries and other alternatives to meet your family's needs when the power goes out.
- Review the supplies you have at home. Have flashlights with extra batteries for every household member. Have enough nonperishable food and water to meet your basic needs for at least a few days.
- Keep mobile phones and other electric equipment charged and gas tanks full.
- M5C maintains emergency food and water supplies as well as first aid kits and supplies.

Communications



Brightwheel

We use Brightwheel for our parent portal to keep parents informed about all things M5C (events, snack calendar, newsletter, forms, etc.). It is important that you enroll in order to receive a user code for drop off/pick up. Enrolling in Brightwheel is a requirement for admission.

We send out regular communication through Brightwheel's messaging system. If you are not receiving messages from the school, please call to check your registration with Brightwheel with us.

Written Notes & Bulletin Board

We often send home written notes regarding school in your child's backpack. Please make sure to check your child's backpack daily and respond to the notes as soon as you see them. Also the Bulletin Board outside in the courtyard is used to post upcoming school events. Please take a look at it as you enter the school.

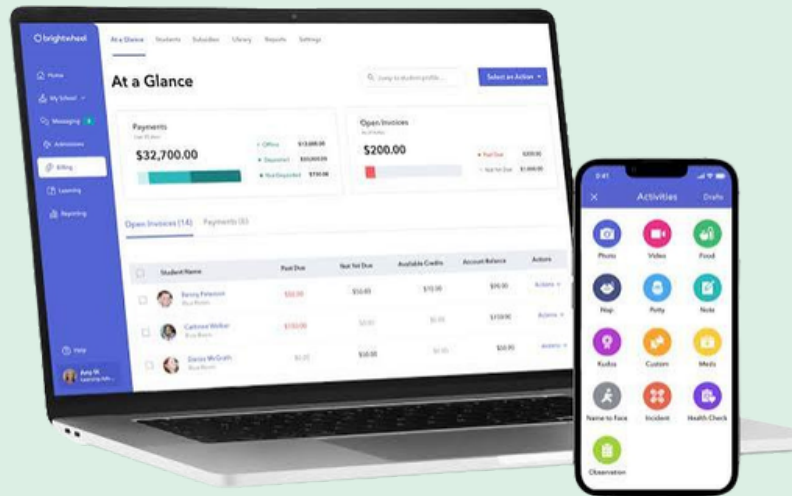
Posting

The school will post on its doors and the outside bulletin board to keep parents informed of events at school and in the community.

Grievances

In the case of a concern, follow the flow of communication. In the case that you bring a concern to the appropriate person and the problem is not rectified, take it to the next highest level (e.g., speaking to a teacher first, then the Director). Please respect your relationship with the school by not airing your grievances among parents.

Representatives of the school are responsible for bringing information to the Director's attention regarding slander of the school or individuals associated with M5C. Slander is grounds for dismissal from the school. At M5C, we want to build and model healthy relationships for the children, which include treating each other with dignity and respect.



Flow of Communication

Please keep in mind that there is no single communication system that works for everyone. However we strive to be a 'green school', therefore we house most of our forms, etc. on Brightwheel in the "documents" section rather than printing them out. If you ever need a hard copy however, you can request it from the office. Also, we need to partner in our communication endeavors so please respond timely when requested.

- Student development/School operation/Special Confidential Matters/Tuition: Questions regarding these particular areas should be directed to the Director
- General classroom issues: general classroom concerns or questions should be directed to the Lead Teacher or Director
- Curriculum/Class schedule: Director
- Administrative issues: Absences, calendar, school events, children's files, meeting requests, observations, billing issues and similar issues should be directed to the Office Manager

School Calendar

School Events

Each school-year a School Calendar is provided to parents on Brightwheel and part of the re-enrollment packet. We ask that you please calendar all school events, holidays, school closures so that you can plan accordingly. We try to mimic the Castro Valley Unified School District's calendar so that M5C families can enjoy the same holiday breaks. Also, the calendar is subject to change, we try not to revise it any way during the school-year, but if we have to, we will notify you in advance.

Winter and Spring Break

M5C will remain open during some of the Winter and Spring Break vacations for day care. Daycare days are defined as days when school is closed, but day care is available. A calendar will be provided at the beginning of the school year specifying available day care days.

Fulltime parents receive the option of using these days at no additional cost but must sign up for the days and hours needed. Part-time families may elect to sign up for daycare during daycare day(s) at rates to be posted at time of sign-up.

Since tuition is divided into ten installments based on the days of attendance, tuition is not discounted during these periods.

Summer Camp

Each school year ends in June. Tuition is paid in 10 installments throughout the year and end on the last day in May. The summer program runs June, July and mid-August and is available on a sign-up basis to continuing families. You only pay for the summer modules (weeks) you sign up for. This allows families flexibility in the summer / vacation plans.

Our summer program is also available to new families who enroll in the following school-year. New families are not eligible to enroll only in the summer program – it is not a stand-alone program.



Community Giving

Food Drive

Twice a year we work with the Alameda County Community Food Bank to hold a food drive to collect non-perishable foods for those in need in our community. Bins are provided at school. Parents are encouraged to shop with their children and talk about their intention to give food to others.

Toy Drive

Around the holidays in November and December we partner with the local Fire Department to collect toys for the Toys for Tots organization that provide gifts for needy children in our community. Bins are provided at school. Parents are encouraged to shop with their children and talk about their intention to give toys to children who might not otherwise receive any during the holidays.

Reduce, Reuse & Recycle:

We also donate unclaimed items from the **Lost and Found** or daycare materials to local **thrift shops** so they may be reused (another “green” effort).

Again, trying to leave less of a carbon footprint, we use mostly donated recycled paper in the classrooms and the office. So, if your office has non-confidential paper that would otherwise be thrown away, please donate to our School.



M5C is a not for profit business and does not fundraise. The budget is balanced carefully whereby tuition is managed to cover the operations expenses and payroll for the staff. However, the school does benefit from the following:

Book Fair

M5C partners with Barefoot Books wherein anyone purchasing (or donating books/materials from Barefoot Books on behalf of the School, M5C receives a percentage of the proceeds. M5C then takes those proceeds and provides it to the teachers for their use in purchasing Barefoot books/materials for their classroom. Families can also choose to purchase and donate books to the school.

Tax-Deductible Donation

Because M5C is a not for profit, we have 501(c) (3) status with the IRS and therefore, any monetary donation to the school is tax deductible.

Final Steps



Referrals

Word of mouth referrals of M5C to family, friends, neighbors is another way we reach future Montessorian families, so please feel free to spread the good word; thank you!

Kindergarten Graduation

After a successful completion of Kindergarten at M5C a graduation celebration will take place concurrently with the Spring Play, in May. Graduation gown photos are taken in May also, and will be available for purchase. Kindergarten graduates are welcome to join the summer program for a final session.

Record Requests

We treat your child's student information privileged and confidential. Records can be released to other educational institutions only with written consent from the child's parent. If a student account is in arrears, the school reserves the right to withhold the child's file until full payment has been made. Student files are retained for 3 years.

Online Reviews

We really consider it a privilege to have had your child at M5C and in all cases, have treated your child with great care and provided quality education. We certainly appreciate any positive reviews you wish to share online. We want to continue to serve the children in this community with quality child care and education. New parents are also searching for this, and will appreciate your recommendation – you remember what an important decision choosing a school for your child was.



Get in touch

- 📍 22781 Canyon Court, Castro Valley, CA 94552
 - 📞 510-581-3729
 - ✉ montessori.ins@gmail.com
 - ➡ montessoricastrovalley.com
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