



# Community Guide

We are delighted that you will be with us this year! This Community Guide is designed to help you learn about the philosophy, policies and procedures at Amare Montessori.

*Physical Address:*

Amare Montessori  
294 Warfield Boulevard  
Clarksville, TN 37043  
931-368-3818

[www.amaremontessori.org](http://www.amaremontessori.org)

*Tuition Payments:*

Amare Montessori  
c/o Montessori Academy  
100 Montessori Drive  
Brentwood, TN 37027

## Montessori Academy, Inc. Administration

Executive Director,  
Dr. Jim Bernstorff

## Amare Montessori Administration

Head of School  
Jaime Yeager

## Board of Directors

The board is comprised of non-administration professionals  
and members of the administration.



## Accreditations

American Montessori Society (AMS)  
National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA)  
(in process) International Montessori Council (IMC)

Validated School by the Montessori Alliance of Tennessee

## Not-For-Profit School

Amare Montessori, under the umbrella of Montessori Academy, Inc., is a not-for-profit school that practices a non-discriminatory policy and accepts all qualified students without regard to race, color, and national origin.

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## 1.1 Welcome from Executive Director, Dr. Jim Bernstorf

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I am pleased to welcome you as parents to Amare Montessori and to the Montessori Academy Inc. organization. Montessori Academy, Inc. includes Montessori Academy in Brentwood, TN, as well as the Montessori Training Center of Brentwood (MTCOB) and Amare Montessori. MTCOB is a training center for Montessori teachers seeking their Montessori teaching credentials.

In 2014, we were discussing the possibility of starting another school in the area with our same commitment to the Montessori philosophy of education. Within weeks of that discussion, we encountered Jaime Yeager and Beth Tejeda with their dream to have an authentic Montessori school in Clarksville – not only for their own children, but for other children of the community as well. Amare is now fully accredited; making both of our campuses two of the very few AMS accredited schools in the region. As the Executive Director of Montessori Academy Inc., I welcome you not just to Amare Montessori, but also to the Montessori Academy Inc. family.

Dr. Jim Bernstorf  
Executive Director  
[jimbernstorf@montessoriacad.org](mailto:jimbernstorf@montessoriacad.org)

## 1.2 Welcome from Head of School, Jaime Yeager

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Welcome to Amare Montessori! We are a school community that fosters a love for life long learning within every student and are delighted your family is a piece of the community.

You have joined the most extraordinary school in Clarksville! We are dedicated to creating a carefully prepared environment based on Montessori Philosophy and Principles. Our staff is well educated and fully prepared to provide a quality, nurturing experience to educate the whole child.

Amare Montessori is a community of adults and children, working in tandem, to meet the needs of each individual learner. We strongly encourage an open and honest dialogue among staff members and parents to ensure that each child's needs are met to the fullest degree.

I ask that you read this guide carefully to ensure that you are aware of our policies and procedures. I hope this guide answers any questions you may have as well as piques your interest to learn more about the Montessori Method and Philosophy. This guide represents the spirit of the positive expectations of everyone within our school community. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have questions, concerns, or ideas to share. We look forward to an exciting journey with your family filled with purposeful learning, genuine laughter, and celebration of community!

Kindest regards,

Jaime Yeager  
Head of School

## 2. AMARE MISSION, VISION, AND PHILOSOPHY

### 2.1 Our Mission

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Fostering a love for life long learning in an authentic Montessori community.

### 2.2 Our Vision

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Amare's vision is that each student will become an independent, confident, motivated learner, and a responsible community member as a result of the dynamic partnership between students, parents, and teachers. This partnership within the exceptional Montessori environment, while developing these characteristics, enables each student to become a life-long learner.

### 2.3 Our Philosophy at Amare Montessori

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The following qualities are how we seek to build relationships with our families and with which the family-school community is best served:

- With empathy and collaboration
- With a respect for the parent as the child's first teacher
- With an obligation of advocacy by the teacher when the child's development may be served
- Through tactful conversation, which fosters collaboration rather than top-down, teacher-parent relations
- With an understanding that we admit families, not merely children
- Through positive encouragement and by listening to a child's and family's needs

Therefore, the following is a list of terms and phrases that identify children's needs, of which we are obligated to give them.

- |                  |                   |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| • Acceptance     | • Freedom of      | • Recognition     |
| • Love           | Movement          | • Time            |
| • Stimulation    | • Sense of Family | • Honor           |
| • Peace          | • Structure       | • Encouragement   |
| • Ability to     | • Independence    | • A Place to Call |
| Concentrate      | • Boundaries      | their Own         |
| • Spirituality   | • Affection       | • Compassion      |
| • Empathy        | • Attention       | • Courtesy        |
| • Respect        | • Responsibility  | • Graciousness    |
| • Predictability | • Accountability  | • Security        |
| • To be heard    | • Opportunity for | • Kindness        |
| • Character      | Leadership        |                   |

Furthermore,

- Curriculum extends beyond the State of Tennessee curriculum requirements and is comprehensive, rich, and effective. Instruction is carried out individually, and in small and large groups.
- Our positively stated ground rules help to develop and maintain a community that reflects harmony and respect for the environment, one's peers, and oneself.
- Multi-age students bond as a community that reflects peace and respect. Older students mentor the first younger students and become the leaders in the class.
- Each classroom is guided by a Montessori trained teacher.
- Montessori materials are sequentially arranged. The materials invite hands-on learning and stimulate motivation.
- Students organize their daily/weekly plans and are expected to do most work at school. They work independently and are allowed to finish their work in the time frame they need.
- Intentional classroom lessons and materials teach conflict resolution skills.
- Life skills are taught at every level at Amare Montessori.
- A strong partnering of teachers, parents, and students enables students to achieve their maximum potential academically, physically, socially, and spiritually at Amare Montessori.

### 3. ACCREDITATION & ORGANIZATION

#### 3.1 Affiliations and Accreditations

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Montessori schools vary greatly in interpretation, consistency, and teacher training. In the United States, there are approximately 5,000 Montessori schools of varying degrees of competence, standards, and sizes. Some schools are connected with and funded by churches and others are privately owned. Montessori schools are not franchised.

Montessori teacher training is extensive and essential to the excellence of the classrooms. To be fully certified as a Montessori teacher, one must have earned a Bachelor's degree.

The American Montessori Society (AMS) and the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA) have all awarded Amare Montessori accreditation. Amare is currently in the accreditation process with the International Montessori Council (IMC).

#### 3.2 TN Department of Education (DOE) Licensing

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Our Toddler and Primary Programs are regulated by the Tennessee Department of Education. A copy of the *Rules of the Tennessee Department of Education State Board of Education* is in the Administrative Office and is available for review by parents. A summary of the rules and regulations is found at the end of this guide.

#### 3.3 Organizational Structure

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##### **Toddler: (18-36 months)**

A Toddler class begins the educational process during the sensitive period for language and movement, from 18 months – 36 months. In this class, toddlers are encouraged to have independence and to explore and make choices in a safe environment. Toddlers are given many opportunities for learning, including being taught to care for their own needs and the needs of the classroom. They love to help set the table for snack, fold laundry, sweep crumbs off the floor, wash dishes, and put

their belongings away. They also have available to them Montessori materials, which teach language, counting, sorting, and all about the world around them.

The learning environment is home-like and fully equipped with Montessori materials, a gross motor area in the classroom, and a separate outdoor play area. Montessori Toddler programs worldwide are very successful in preparing children to enter Primary programs by meeting their developmental needs while they are 18 months to 3 years.

### **A child is ready for our Primary Program when ...**

- The child exhibits independence for expressing their needs and desires.
- The child has mastered toileting.  
*(Please see Appendix A.3 for more information about Toilet Training.)*
- The child dresses and undresses him/herself, including shoes.
- The child feeds him/herself.
- The child talks quietly and waits for a turn to talk.
- The child can walk purposefully in the classroom.
- The child can lie down quietly on his/her rest mat for rest.

### **Primary: (3-6 years, including Kindergarten)**

Primary students enjoy and need repetition. The environment is sequenced so that the student can move from less to more difficult work. During work time students are absorbed in an exercise they have chosen. The student receives a presentation of how to do the exercise and then may repeat it as many times as he/she pleases. If the student chooses the same exercise repeatedly throughout a week or two it is because he/she has discovered the satisfaction of skill-building and mastery. The key to mastery is the desire to skill-build. Mastery produces confidence and the motivation to try another task. Kindergarten is the last year of our Primary program. Our extensive (3-6) curriculum prepares our children for Lower Elementary.

### **Elementary (6-12 years, 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>)**

When the Primary student meets the exit requirements and moves up to the Elementary program, he/she discovers that the new classroom is beautifully arranged with more advanced materials. He/she is welcomed into a class of helpful students. The ground rules are important, especially in the areas of respect, kindness, and caring. Work time continues to involve the use of appropriately sequenced Montessori materials and more advanced science, history, and literature curriculum. The classroom library allows the student to develop research skills. Like in Primary, the multi-aged Elementary classrooms give younger students opportunity to observe older students complete advanced work. Mentoring is a critical life skill that is taught and practiced in our multi-level classrooms which helps to develop leadership skills.

As the student progresses through Upper Elementary they are able to engage with the most advanced Montessori materials. The work cycle continues to be the focus of the classroom with an exploration of a variety of subjects. Students are expected to do most, if not all, of their work at school, edit their written papers, write the results of science experiments, give oral reports, and improve computer keyboarding and research skills.

An important component of Montessori educational instruction is to design a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. The students continue to move from concrete toward abstract thinking, working from the big picture to increasing detail. The foundational materials, which serve as the backbone of the Montessori philosophy, will continue to be utilized and expanded upon as needed.



The math, science, language, history, and geography materials give the students full advantage for comprehension and application of basic concepts as well as continue to build higher level thinking skills including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

## 4. AMARE MONTESSORI COMMUNITY

### 4.1 Parent Responsibilities

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- Be sure your child arrives on time each day.
- Build independence in your child through daily responsibilities at home.
- Communicate with teachers (i.e. going out of town, new baby, death or change in family, etc.).
- Read the weekly e-News and classroom emails.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and “Whole School Events” to become involved.
- Observe in your child’s classroom to gain a better understanding of how the classroom functions and how your child engages in their classroom.
- Enjoy and explore the world through daily reading with your child.
- If you have any concerns or questions, contact your child’s teacher or the Head of School.
- Complete all required paperwork and return it in a timely manner.
- Be financially responsible for your fees and tuition payments.
- Read the Community Guide and return the Acknowledgement Form to the office (Appendix A.2). (DOE Requirement)

### 4.2 Teacher Responsibilities

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- Create a peaceful, stimulating environment where children can learn.
- Convey friendliness, caring, and respect to all students and parents.
- Communicate with parents regularly.
- Continually keep the best interests of the individual students and the classroom as a whole a top priority in decision making.
- Clarify academic and social requirements to students and parents at each level.
- Facilitate the students’ social and emotional development.
- **Elementary:** Meet with students regularly to discuss student work and review progress.

### 4.3 Student Responsibilities

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- Be sure to arrive on time each day.
- Know and follow the classroom Rules and Responsibilities.
- Dress in accordance with our dress code.
- Be polite, considerate, mannerly, and courteous to all peers, children, and adults.
- Be a contributing, positive member of Amare Montessori’s student community.
- **Elementary:** Help develop family and personal routines for a successful school week.
  - Be responsible for your school bag, lunch box, and personal property.
  - Complete work in a timely manner and to the best of your ability.
  - Complete unfinished work at home and return it to school promptly. (This should be a rare occasion.)

### 4.4 Volunteerism

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Volunteering gives parents the chance to connect with the Amare Montessori Community as well as their children’s classroom. It is Amare Montessori’s hope that all parents will commit to using personal

time and skills to benefit their child's classroom. As a community supported school, Amare relies on the families to fulfill service hours throughout the year to assist with various projects and events. Any adult family member, including parents, grandparents and caregivers, may perform service hours. Families are strongly encouraged to volunteer throughout the school year, as basic to the Montessori program is the concept of giving back to the community. The personal rewards parents derive from serving are priceless including mentoring to children to develop a love for giving and doing for others. In addition to the obvious benefit to our school, we believe asking parents to give of their time creates opportunities for our families and staff to develop closer relationships. Our goal is to have everyone working together to enhance the educational experience of our children. The Parent Questionnaire (included with the enrollment packet) assists the school in understanding your interests and skills.

## 5. ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT RECORDS

### 5.1 Enrollment Policy

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*No child shall be denied admission to Amare Montessori on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, or national origin.*

### 5.2 Withdrawal Policy

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Amare Montessori has an established withdrawal policy that is included in the Enrollment Packet. If you have any questions about this policy, or if you have any special circumstances that are not addressed in the policy, please feel free to discuss your concerns with the Head of School. (See the Discipline Procedures section of this Handbook for other dismissal circumstances.) The withdrawal policy is as follows:

To withdraw my child before July 1<sup>st</sup> of any given year I must submit a letter to the Head of School no later than June 30<sup>th</sup>, requesting to be released from the year's contract. This request must be accompanied by a termination fee of \$100. Records will be released after the termination fee has been paid. If a family wishes to withdraw after July 1 but before the first day of school, tuition for August will still be owed.

After June 30<sup>th</sup>, to be released from this contract, I must give a full calendar month notice of intent to withdraw or I will owe the tuition for the following month. For example, if on March 1<sup>st</sup> you notify the school in writing that the last day of attendance will be March 31<sup>st</sup>, no tuition will be due beyond March. If notice is given on March 15<sup>th</sup> then the full tuition payment for April must be paid. All tuition payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month and are considered late if received after the 4<sup>th</sup> of each month. A late fee of \$25 will be applied to accounts with outstanding balances each month.

### 5.3 Student Records

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Files are kept for each student at Amare Montessori. Access to the files is limited to the Administration, the TN Department of Education, the student's parents, and the student's teachers. Parents must approve requests for records to be sent to another school and sign a transcript release stating such. Student records will not be released if there is a balance owed on the account. Files will be kept for 7 years after an Elementary student has left Amare.

## 6. FINANCES

### 6.1 Tuition

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Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month. **You will not receive a bill unless you are late on your payment.** A \$25 late fee must accompany payments received after the 4<sup>th</sup>. If necessary, a parent may temporarily make weekly payments to avoid going into arrears or losing the child's space. Amare Montessori reserves the right to fill a child's space if tuition is not paid in full by the 4<sup>th</sup> of each month, unless arrangements have been made with the Head of School. If you need a receipt, email your request to [info@amaremontessori.org](mailto:info@amaremontessori.org) and the receipt will be attached to the return email. If paying by check or cash, bring it to the office and hand deliver it to office staff or the Head of School. Please do not send your check in with your child or give it to a teacher.

Preferably, tuition checks are paid online via our ParentsWeb portal or may be mailed to the following address. *Please write your child's name in the memo line.*

Montessori Academy, Inc.  
100 Montessori Drive  
Brentwood, TN 37027

### 6.2 Tuition Discounts

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- A 2% discount may be applied to yearly tuition (not After Care) if paid in full before August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Families receive a \$50 per month sibling discount on the 2<sup>nd</sup> child's tuition. Families receive a \$100 per month sibling discount when three children are enrolled. Families receive a \$150 per month sibling discount when 4 children are enrolled.

#### **\*4-Step Student Referral Program: \$100 credit**

1. Refer a family to Amare OR Montessori Academy...
2. Once the child is enrolled and begins...
3. New family mentions you referred them...
4. You earn a \$100 credit on your account (or if you pre-paid the entire year, the school will write you a check).

### 6.3 Policy for Payment by Automatic Bank Draft

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We encourage you to **use your bank's online bill-pay system** just like you electronically pay your other bills. Use your child's name as the account number. To allow five days processing time, put the due date as the 25<sup>th</sup> of the prior month for us to receive it on the first day of each month. Please have tuition send directly to Montessori Academy, 100 Montessori Drive, Brentwood, TN 37027.

## 7. GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

### 7.1 Safety

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#### 7.1.1 Emergency Situations

Amare Montessori has procedures in place in the event of a weather emergency, fire, lockdown, or bomb threat. All classrooms have designated "safe places" and exit plans, depending on the nature of the emergency. All staff members are trained in the procedures and classrooms have regular drills

to practice evacuation and lock down procedures. Please contact the Administration Office if you would like more information on the specifics of the emergency plans.

### 7.1.2 Crisis Management Plan

The safety of children and staff will be considered at all times. In the event of a crisis, administrators will make safety and physical needs decisions based upon the information available at the time. The following items address the most basic and primary concerns:

**Communication Challenges:** Communication with parents is offered in multiple formats. In the event of a crisis, not all communication forms may be available, but administrators will take the following steps to encompass as many forms of communication as possible:

1. All school email blast
2. Text Message to Parents – sent from the school through the Remind App
3. News networks
4. Phone Lists of Students & Parents & Parent approved Emergency Contacts

**Location of Children:** Keeping children here on this property is always first choice due to transportation issues. Parents are advised to check with their parent-approved Emergency Contact pick-up list (grandparents, friends, etc.). Please keep these contacts current in Transparent Classroom. Children will be located in campus locations as follows:

1. Normal campus locations (classrooms and after school care locations)
2. Normal "Safe Place" locations specified for each classroom
3. Outdoor Campus property

**Continuing Operations:** Covered in the Amare Emergency Plan and allows room for flexibility as needed.

### 7.1.3 Minor Accidents

Minor accidents that happen at school will be promptly treated by a staff member and the parents will be notified either by phone, at car circle pick up, through a note, or by their child in the case of Elementary students. We are only authorized to use soap and water on wounds (DOE stipulation). Our classroom teachers and after care teachers are all trained in CPR/First Aid and are required to keep their CPR/First Aid certification current.

## 7.2 Health

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### 7.2.1 Sickness Policy

Children are given a routine visual health check each day upon arrival. Any child who shows symptoms of being ill or infectious will not be admitted to school or will be sent home.

#### ILLNESS/EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL:

One of the most important ways we can keep our classrooms free of illness is to ensure that the children who attend the program every day are healthy. We are careful to consider the needs of working parents when identifying illness, but we also recognize that if children come to school with contagious diseases, then all parents will lose more work time. We do our best to balance the needs of each family with the needs of the community as a whole.

The following criteria will be used to define "un-healthy". If a child has any of the symptoms listed below, they are considered unable to attend school for at least 24 hours, and/or will be sent home unless they have a doctor's note confirming that their symptoms are caused by non-contagious factors such as allergies. A child who is sent home ill may not return to school the following day.

- 1) Persistent cough
- 2) Vomited in past 24 hours
- 3) Rashes of uncertain etiology
- 4) Watery stool
- 5) Uncharacteristic irritability or lethargy
- 6) Persistent crying
- 7) Difficulty breathing
- 8) Excessive mucus/nasal drainage
- 9) Illness that prevents the child from being comfortable in the program

In addition to this school policy, Amare Montessori requires that children be absent from school until symptoms are gone for 24 hours without the aid of medication, and may not return to school the following day, if any one of the following occurs:

1. An episode of diarrhea
2. Temperature of 100.1°F or higher
3. Vomiting
4. Undiagnosed rashes
5. Purulent conjunctivitis, tuberculosis, impetigo, coxsackie, strep throat, scabies, head lice, pertussis, mumps, measles, hepatitis, and other contagious diseases.
6. Illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

In the case of head lice, a child will be examined at school and must be 100% nit free before rejoining their class.

### 7.2.2 Medicine Policy

Prescription medicine, cough syrup, and suppressants may be sent to school in the original container and then inside a Ziploc bag clearly labeled with the child's name. The medicine must be handed to a teacher or administrator. (Please do not send medicine in the lunch box or school bag.) A note of authorization must accompany all medicine. Tape a reminder on top of the lid of the child's lunchbox if it is needed at lunchtime. Teachers will return any medicine that is not allowed or not pre-measured. Fever-reducing medicine may not be given to a child in the morning to "hold down" a fever nor will it be administered at school. State guidelines prohibit us from giving aspirin or other pain-relieving medicine to any child at school. State guidelines classify diaper cream, sunscreen, bug spray, and Neosporin as medicine. If a child needs any of the aforementioned applied at school, a note of permission from the parents must be submitted to the school.

### 7.2.3 Bathroom Etiquette

At Amare we take great strides to ensure a safe and enriching environment for your child to grow in independence and self-reliance. With this, we promote certain bathroom routines at school. All Toddler and Primary students, male and female, are encouraged to sit down while urinating. This is to aid in privacy, promotion of bowel movements, and cleanliness for both the child and the bathroom.

We encourage grace and courtesy regarding bathroom manners, including always knocking and waiting for a response before entering a bathroom; however, sometimes a child will accidentally open the door while another student is at the toilet. With all children sitting, this will allow for more privacy of genitalia.

Typically, a child goes to the bathroom to urinate. However, when a child is seated and relaxed it also aids in the promotion of bowel movements. This provides all children time to listen to their bodies.

We strive for a prepared and clean environment--this includes the bathroom. Sanitation is so important and when children sit to use the toilet, more bodily waste goes into the toilet bowl rather than accidentally elsewhere. Having all children sit to use the toilet helps keep the bathroom cleaner at school.

Thank you for working with us to provide a clean, safe, and comfortable bathroom space for your toddler and primary child at school by promoting, "We Sit at School."

### 7.3 Attendance, Tardiness, and Absence Policy

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#### 7.3.1 Attendance Policy

At Amare we desire for each child to receive the full benefit of a Montessori education, including social cohesion, progression through the Montessori curriculum, and opportunity to develop and strengthen positive self-concept. Consistent attendance is vital to these goals. We ask that you demonstrate your commitment to your child's continued education at Amare by displaying understanding for the importance of daily attendance.

Even though Montessori is self-paced, a student who misses inordinate time in school loses out academically, socially, and personally. Academically, the student misses lessons, gets out-of-step with small group learning, and misses follow-up work. Socially, the student does not have the consistent contact with other children--the basis for stable social relationships. Personally and psychologically, self-esteem suffers when a student does not maintain reasonable academic progress or loses touch in social relationships.

A key reason behind the five-day school week is that it aids the social cohesion of the classroom environment. What is social cohesion? It's the building of the group, the dynamics and the pulse of the classroom. It's the balance between oldest and youngest; first-, second- and third-year children; and even the balance between personalities, cultures and societal norms. The children are subconsciously absorbing all that is around them, including those who are not at school on a regular basis. The children always ask where another child is whenever the child is absent from school.

Not only is each day's lesson important to the individual student, the student's participation in class contributes to the education of others. Your child is part of a larger classroom community and his or her attendance is important to the functioning of the classroom. Absences and tardiness, for any reason, are certain to adversely affect the student's schoolwork. The importance of regular, daily attendance as a basis for academic achievement cannot be over-emphasized.

Children thrive on consistency and routine. Thus, attending school for five consecutive days a week is invaluable to every child. When they attend regularly, the environment becomes more predictable, and the daily routine gives satisfaction rather than the distress or tension of becoming oriented again

after a gap. Dr. Maria Montessori says, "it is through these daily experiences that a social order comes to being ... the only social life that children get in ordinary schools is during playtime or on excursions. Ours live always in an active community."

Children who attend school five days a week, week after week, consistently, also have a much easier time continuing along the progression of materials at their own pace. There is more time for receiving new lessons, less time in between receiving those lessons, better lesson retention, and more time for practicing and mastering lessons. These children are getting the full benefit of one of the cornerstones of an authentic Montessori experience — the three-hour work cycle.

Montessori observed that a minimum of three hours leads to the deepest concentration, which is followed by calm, peaceful, cooperative and kind characteristics. Concentration is considered "healing" as it brings us to feel more confident, energized, and refreshed. We want to be able to offer consistent open-ended time so that children have the freedom to independently choose what to do. If we do this, we observe children who become so engaged that they start to "fall in love" with work. However, a child who is not in school on time five days a week is not able to reap the full benefits of the work cycle.

Student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Current and updated state legislation requires schools to be very aggressive in monitoring attendance and reporting students who are truant (missing more than five school days without adequate excuse) to an appropriate state agency (TCA 49-6-3007(e)).

Responsibilities for school attendance lie with families:

- To stress the importance of regular school attendance
- To limit vacation to the scheduled school vacations
- To schedule appointments after school hours
- To call the office or email your teacher by 8:30 a.m. when there is an absence

and the school:

- To keep accurate records
- To follow through on absences to support the student

As a reminder, Amare does not follow any local school system's calendar; rather, we do what is best for our students and programs. We hope that families will plan to enjoy the week off at Thanksgiving and the two weeks at winter break.

Absences must be reported to the school by parents. Please email your classroom teacher in the case of an absence. Excused absences include illnesses, deaths, and the day prior to or return from a parent deployment. Other excused absences will be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the Head of School. Any unreported absence is considered unexcused. By state law we are required to report students having five or more *unexcused* absences.

### 7.3.2 Tardiness Policy

**Habitual tardiness is unacceptable**, and harmful to the student as well as the entire class.

Please respect your child's need to be well prepared for the school day by being early to school every day. Arrival is from 8:00 to 8:15 a.m. daily for toddler and primary students and 8:00-8:10 a.m. for

elementary students. Students who are late disrupt the class routine, miss valuable presentations, and may fall behind on their work.

Toddler and Primary students need routine and must arrive between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. The car circle will end (and be blocked off for other purposes most days). School doors will lock at 8:15 a.m. at which time parents will need to park and walk their child to the Office and sign in their child on the clipboard at the front. A staff member will then walk your child to his/her classroom. Parents are not permitted to walk their children to the classrooms. Please do not attempt to drop off any student at their exterior classroom door or the play ground when they are tardy. They must be brought to the front office and signed in for the day.

Elementary students are responsible for having their belongings put away and being ready for daily fitness by 8:15 a.m. Please help elementary students be successful in arriving to school between 8:00 and 8:10 a.m. daily so that they can promptly begin fitness at 8:15.

## 7.4 Arrival and Dismissal

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### 7.4.1 Arrival

Before Care: 7:30- 7:55 a.m. Parents will park and walk their child to the Before and After School entrance (second to last door of the South Building). A staff member will receive the child and sign them in for the day.

- For safety, students may not be dropped off under any circumstance before 7:30 a.m.
- No students will be admitted from 7:55 to 8:00, as this is a transition time for Before Care children and teachers to travel to their classrooms for the day.

Beginning at 8:00 a.m. each morning:

- We ask parents to drop their students off in the car circle and not to enter the classrooms. A staff member will greet students at their car and escort them inside. (An exception is made for each child's first day of school at Amare. If a parent wishes to walk their child to the front door and take a picture, they may do so after parking in a parking spot.)
- *Elementary Families:* Please make sure your Elementary child is dropped off **no later than 8:10 a.m.** in order to be ready to start their day promptly at 8:15 a.m. After 8:10, Elementary students are considered tardy and must be dropped off in the front office. Elementary students are permitted to safely walk in the crosswalks, from their vehicle to the door, unaccompanied.

Please note the following:

- **The Amare driveway and car circle is a "Tech Free Zone."** ALL electronics are to be turned off and put away before pulling into the Amare driveway. The use of TVs, tablets, phones, and gaming devices in the car circle significantly slows down students as they exit their cars. In the case of adults using the same, the example of being an undistracted driver is vital to everyone's safety.
- If your child forgets something important please consider that, in most cases, children need to experience the natural consequence of forgetting a school bag or their lunch. In the case of a forgotten lunch they will be invited to ask classmates if they have extra or to create a lunch from leftover snack items.
- **Please say good-bye to your child in the car since prolonged good-byes leave a child feeling insecure.** Empower your child with a sweet, cheerful comment such as, "Have



a great day!," "See you at 3:00!," or "Be your best self!" If your child experiences separation anxiety, encourage him/her to bring a favorite book (include child's name) for the teacher to read to the class. Remember your child will be comforted after you leave, if needed. You are welcome to call the office for reassurance.

- **Children are not accepted after 8:45 a.m. unless a doctor's appointment delayed arrival. Please ask your child's doctor for a note to verify appointment.** Missing work time disrupts your child from having a productive day. Rest time is extremely difficult for teachers if a child has slept late in the morning. Amare Montessori is a school and not a daycare.
- Please leave all breakfast items in the car. Snack is served early and in each classroom.

#### 7.4.2 Dismissal

##### **Authorized Individuals**

Students will be released only to Parents and Emergency Contacts (per the Enrollment Contract). Tennessee state car seat laws state that children may only be released to a person with proper seat restraints for the child's age and size and who present themselves capable of operating a vehicle. Employees of Amare Montessori are not permitted to buckle children into their car seat. It is solely the responsibility of the adult picking up students to buckle them. In the event of an emergency and a parent cannot be reached to pick up their child from school, the school will contact the Emergency Contacts on the Enrollment Contract.

##### **Half-Day Dismissal (Toddler/Primary)**

Students registered to attend half day will be dismissed from the front door. Children need to be picked up promptly at 11:45. If you arrive late, you will be charged a late pick up fee of \$5.00.

##### **Afternoon Dismissal**

Dismissal times are as follows:

- 3:00 – 3:15 p.m. Primary Students **without** elementary siblings are dismissed.
- 3:15 – 3:30 p.m. Elementary students are dismissed with their younger siblings.
- 3:15 - 3:30 p.m. Toddler Students are dismissed from the front of the school.
- Teachers will bring your students to you. Please place your car in PARK before or as the teacher approaches your car with your child. When possible, place car seats by the passenger rear door so the teacher can load your child from the curb without getting into traffic. Per Tennessee State law, staff members are not permitted to buckle your child into their car seats. Please assist your child with buckling if they are not able to independently do so. **It is the driver of the vehicle's ultimate responsibility to ensure the child is buckled correctly.**
- 3:30 p.m. dismissal ends.
- After 3:30 p.m., children will be escorted to After School Care and the parent will incur a late fee charge.

**When every driver assumes the responsibility of efficient pick-up** and abides by the Tech Free Zone, dismissal time will be a pleasant closure for the school day.

##### **3:30 – 5:15 After School Care Dismissal**

- **After School Care closes daily at 5:15 p.m.** (with the exception of half days when there is not after School Care). At 5:15 After Care staff are ready to leave campus. If there is an

emergency and you anticipate arriving after 5:15 p.m., please call the school as soon as possible. Habitual lateness will result in a call from the Head of School and the possible suspension of After School Care privileges.

- **Picking up after 5:15** will result in a \$25 Late Pick Up Fee.

#### **Irregular pick-up during school hours:**

If your child has a doctor's appointment, please send a note to the teacher, come to the office and sign him/her out when it is time. If possible, please schedule appointments for after school. When it is not possible, please schedule them for after 11:45 so that your child can depart at the half-day dismissal time, causing less disruption to his day. When you arrive at school, please report to the office. Please sign your child out on the clipboard while you wait in the front office.

#### **When school is a scheduled half-day:**

Primary and Toddler children are dismissed at 11:45 a.m.

Elementary students are dismissed at 12:00 p.m.

#### **We require your written (email is acceptable) permission for your child to:**

- Be picked up at any irregular time other than normal dismissal time.
- Be picked up by anyone other than parents or the usual carpool.
- Go on field trips.

#### **7.4.3 Campus Driveway Instructions**

##### **Drop Off/Pick-up:**

- Please follow the instructions of our staff members while in the car circle.
- Drive slowly at all times when on campus.
- Do not leave your car unattended in the drop-off/pick-up lane.
- Never leave your car with the engine still running. Drive safely and please buckle up.
- ALWAYS accompany children in the parking lot.

#### **7.5 Room Placement**

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Next level placement is determined by teachers and administrators based upon several factors, including space availability. Parental requests will be considered but final determination is made by the administration, after meeting with teachers and parents as needed. Based upon our accreditation status, all rooms are staffed with highly qualified teachers and are strong both academically and socially.

For students transitioning mid-year to a new classroom, decisions are made as the student approaches the transitioning date.

#### **7.6 Discipline Procedures**

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In Montessori we try to assist our children in developing the skills necessary to live peacefully in the world. Our teachers work very hard to create peaceful, well-run classrooms where children can thrive and grow academically, socially, and spiritually. Grace and Courtesy lessons aid the children in becoming kind, thoughtful, and peaceful members of their community and are presented throughout the year on all program levels.

Discipline is also necessary for this peaceful existence. By definition, 'discipline' means to educate or train. The first step to discipline or guidance is for a positive connection to be established between

the student and their guides. Montessori encourages the growth of self-discipline within the child. We do our best to build up the child's self-confidence so that he can handle the situation better the next time. Montessori children obtain this discipline through their work. In order for the work to occur uninterrupted, we must have a few simple classroom rules. Classroom ground rules are presented to students as guidelines necessary to develop and maintain the kind of community that reflects harmony and respect for the environment, one's peers and oneself. Each rule represents a goal to be achieved individually and collectively.

They are as follows:

- We walk inside.
- We work quietly at a rug or table.
- We put our work away ready for the next person.
- We respect ourselves and others.
- We use time wisely.

### **Toddler and Primary Procedures:**

Toddler and Primary teachers and assistants will address violation of these rules with redirection or the following problem-solving process, as necessary.

1. *Stop! I think we have a problem!* The adult helps children realize they are in a conflict situation.
2. *What is the problem?* Through observation and questioning, an adult helps children verbalize the problem. This also involves a statement of commitment from all parties involved to come to a peaceable and win-win situation.
3. *What are all the solutions to the problem?* The adult guides the children through possible ways to solve the situation.
4. *What is the best solution?* The adult guides the children to agree on a solution and implement it.
5. *Is it working?* The adult checks back through observation and questioning to make sure that the solution agreed upon is meeting the needs of the children.

This model of problem solving also helps children learn critical thinking skills. We hope you will use this model of problem solving with your child. We think you will be amazed at how well a three and four-year-old can be stepped through this process. And it is heartwarming to see a five-year-old use it with no adult guidance!

In the Toddler program, it is developmentally appropriate to see behaviors such as biting, pushing, and hitting. However, the school does not take these behaviors lightly. These behaviors can become habitual and widespread very rapidly if both the school and the parents do not address them.

Teachers will address unwanted behaviors with the children immediately. An incident report will be sent home and filed with the Head of School by the end of the day. If there are multiple incidents in a short period of time, the child's teachers and/or the Head of School will meet with the family of the

child to devise appropriate strategies to eliminate unwanted behaviors. If the behaviors do not stop, the Head of School may recommend consulting with outside professionals.

Teachers use many strategies in the classroom to help children succeed in their environment. These strategies include redirection, removal of a child from a situation he/she cannot handle, encouragement to make more appropriate choices, guided conflict resolution, and helping the child choose purposeful work.

Furthermore, children will be encouraged to help restore a relationship as needed through guidance of finding practical solutions for their actions. For example, a child who has accidentally bumped into another child because they are running through the classroom will be asked to check in with that child to see if they are hurt, if they can do anything to make them feel better, and then asked to retrace their steps using walking feet. Natural or logical consequences will be utilized as appropriate.

Examples include:

- Redirection
- Removal of a child from a situation he/she cannot handle
- Encouragement to make more appropriate choices
- An adult helping the child choose purposeful work
- Offering a hug, ice pack, Band-Aid, or tissue to a child they have hurt
- Writing a letter or card
- Having a discussion afterward about the incident
- Responsibly cleaning up after themselves
- Taking time to repair a maimed material
- Repeating an action appropriately when it is not done properly (e.g., walking around a work rug)

If behavior issues arise in the classroom, the teacher, after careful observation, will consult with an support staff and an administrator about the difficulties experienced. The teacher may take the child to discuss the problem and possible solutions with an administrator. We do our best to build up the child's self-confidence so that he can handle the situation better the next time. Usually we will not send a note home with a child on the child's first visit with an administrator but will do so if the problem cannot be resolved without the parent's help.

If more help is needed, the teacher will communicate with the parents and arrange a parent conference. Recommendation for outside professional assistance (OT, Speech, PT or other services) may be suggested in some cases. A follow up conference will be scheduled to review if behavior has improved.

Because we are a school that promotes peace, inappropriate behavior including any of the following: disruptive or rude behavior, aggression whether physical or verbal, abuse or bullying of any kind that violates the rights of others, will have the following consequences for Toddler and Primary Students:

### **First offense:**

An adult will help to mediate the problem-solving process. An Incident Report may be written depending on the severity of the action.

**Second offense same day:**

The child will be asked to sit in an observation chair or stay next to the teacher or assistant until the child is ready to work again peacefully. This is not considered punishment, rather as an opportunity for the child to compose himself and observe the appropriate behaviors being modeled by the adults and classmates. An Incident Report will be completed and signed by the parent.

**Third offense same day:**

The child will be taken to the office and sent home. Parent will be called. The teacher and administration will determine the number of days the child is to refrain from attending school. Parent will be given a sheet of expectations of the child's expected behavior at school and at home.

If a child reaches more than 3 offenses in a 2-week period it may be considered a severely disruptive behavior pattern. A conference will be scheduled to devise a behavior modification plan.

The following action will be taken in the case of harmful behavior, which includes but is not limited to assault, biting, hitting, kicking, fighting, throwing objects, spitting, pushing, pinching, name calling, screaming, harassment, fleeing the environment, or severely disruptive behavior that continues over a period of time:

- The child will be removed from the classroom and sent to the office.
- An Incident Report will be made for all disruptive or destructive behaviors.
- Parents will be notified and asked to pick up child from school or event.
- A conference will be held with the parents.
- A Behavior Plan will be developed that may include but is not limited to recommendations for evaluations/consultations (OT, PT, Speech, Behavioral Therapy, Counseling, etc.), plan of action for when the behavior occurs, journaling of behaviors by parent and teacher and possibly food diary if deemed necessary.
- Possible dismissal

If the inappropriate behavior does not improve and all the above procedures have been utilized without success, the parent will be asked to withdraw the child and to find a place in which the child's needs will be better met. This is a "no fault" policy and there will be release from the enrollment contract without penalty.

**Elementary Procedures:**

Our teachers work very hard to create peaceful, well-run classrooms where children can thrive and grow academically, socially, and spiritually. We use a positive approach to discipline to help the student become successful, productive members of our community. We use the ground rules, and the Rights, Responsibilities and Consequences chart (see below) to help guide the students into behavior that is appropriate for our community at Amare Montessori. If a student is having trouble following through with responsibilities, and the teacher's intervention is not sufficient to change the student's behavior, the Head of School will be consulted, and the following steps will be taken to help redirect the child's behavior.

Because we are a school that promotes peace, inappropriate behavior including any of the following: disruptive or rude behavior, aggression whether physical or verbal, abuse or bullying of any kind that violates the rights of others, will have the following consequences for Elementary Students:

**First offense:**

Student is given a warning by a teacher or support staff.

**Second offense in the same day:**

Student is brought by the teacher to the office for a conference with the Head of School. A plan is worked out to help the student change his/her behavior. Student writes an \*Incident Report in office and brings it back the following day with a parent signature in order to re-enter the class. The student is sent home. Usually this is sufficient to change the student's behavior.

As a community, the teachers, faculty and staff at Amare will monitor the child's actions on a daily basis. Amare may begin a record of incidences in order to help determine and track habitual behavior and possible causes for the behaviors. On the Elementary level, the child is now prepared to take more responsibility for his behavior.

The Rights Responsibilities, and Consequences Chart is presented yearly, as well as when needed throughout the school year. Students and Parents are expected to review the chart and sign agreement to it yearly.

- ❖ **PLEASE NOTE:** If an Elementary student physically injures another child or teacher, even if it is the first offence, the consequences will be as follows depending on the severity of the injury: immediately sent home, immediate 1-3 day out-of-school suspension, or immediate expulsion from school.
- ❖ Bullying of any kind is not acceptable or permitted and will be handled with diligence. Bullying includes but is not limited to, verbal threats or demeaning speech towards another child or adult. Bullying is defined as intentionally and habitually cruel behavior towards others. Interpersonal conflict; however, is not bullying and is part of the developmental process we help students work through. Working as a team, we can help all of our students to become strong, considerate, contributing members of our Amare Montessori community and future leaders of the world. Please let your child's teacher(s) know if your child needs help in this area.
- ❖ Incident Reports:
  - Elementary Students- Incident Report should contain a plan for future behavior and, if appropriate, an apology to the appropriate persons involved in the incident and the parent's signature for the student to be re-admitted to class. A copy of suggested format will be discussed with the student.
  - Primary Students- Incident Report is written by either the teacher or the student describing the inappropriate or harmful behavior and what the follow up was with the student. It will be signed by the parent and returned to the Head of School.
  - Toddler Students- An Incident report will be filled out by the teacher, signed by the parent and returned to the Head of School.

***Amare Montessori reserves the right...***

Amare Montessori reserves the right to skip all of the above steps and to suspend, dismiss, or ask for the immediate withdrawal of any student at any time, at the sole discretion of the Head of School, if that student's work, progress, conduct, or influence (on or off campus), falls below acceptable

educational or social standards. Each student's enrollment is subject to the rules and policies adopted or amended by the Head of School.

Child's Rights	Child's Responsibilities	Child's Consequences
The child is free to use material displayed in the environment.	The child must use the material respectfully. The child may not use it in a way that disturbs others. The child will return the material to the appropriate spot on the shelf.	Misuse of material will require a break from material use until such time as the child has demonstrated respectful use of other classroom material.
The child may work at a table or on a rug; whichever is suitable to the work chosen.	The child may not use the material at or on a display shelf as his presence there would obstruct access to the other materials.	The child will be offered more suitable work location options by the guide.
The child has the right to work undistracted by others.	The child is not allowed to disturb or to distract others. No child may interfere with another's learning cycle.	A child distracting other children will leave the classroom until they are able to engage in meaningful work.
The child need not join a group activity and may continue his/her activity individually or he/she may stand apart as a silent observer.	A child is not allowed to interfere an activity if he/she has chosen not to join; this is his/her responsibility to the group.	A child distracting a group activity will be redirected by an adult to appropriate choices.
The child is free to sit or move around quietly. He/she may be observing or thinking or he/she may simply be relaxing.	The child has the responsibility to engage themselves in meaningful work.	A child choosing not to engage in meaningful work may be asked to spend a few moments in an observation chair watching children engaged in meaningful work.
The child will be treated respectfully in the Montessori classroom.	The child will treat fellow community members with respectful words and actions.	A child that is disrespectful in words or actions will leave the classroom until they are prepared to return respectfully and able to discuss their behavior. Continued neglect of this responsibility will result in being removed from the classroom for the remainder of the day.

## 7.7 Communication

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### 7.7.1 Office Hours and Website

Office hours are 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Monday through Friday when the school is open. For more information about our school, please see our website at [www.amaremontessori.org](http://www.amaremontessori.org).

### 7.7.2 Online School Directory

For our online school directory, please go to our website and click on "ParentsWeb". We reserve the right to keep private any personal information that a parent does not want published. USING THIS INFORMATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOLICITATION IS PROHIBITED.

### 7.7.3 Tools for Communicating

The School phone number is 931-368-3818. Messages are checked throughout the day. Kindly leave a message if your call is not answered.

All classrooms have an email address to communicate more effectively with parents. Teachers will check emails by 1:00 p.m. each day. If you send an email in the evening, it will not be checked until the next day. **If you would like to talk with a teacher or schedule a conference**, please send a short email to your child's teacher or hand a note to the greeter during car circle drop off and a teacher will call or email you as soon as he/she is free. **If it is urgent**, call the office and we will contact the teacher. Please notify your teacher via email of any early pick-ups for appointments or scheduled absences. Should you need to pick up your student early, unexpectedly, please call or email the office to inform us, as teachers may not check emails and see the request.

#### **Staff Emails:**

- Upper Elementary (Andrea Ellison), [upperel@amaremontessori.org](mailto:upperel@amaremontessori.org)
- Lower Elementary (Becky Bittner and Leigh Bowron), [lowerel@amaremontessori.org](mailto:lowerel@amaremontessori.org)
- Primary South (Maria Thomas), [psouth@amaremontessori.org](mailto:psouth@amaremontessori.org)
- Primary North (Teresa Strandquist), [pnorth@amaremontessori.org](mailto:pnorth@amaremontessori.org)
- Toddler (Alexis Beatty), [toddler@amaremontessori.org](mailto:toddler@amaremontessori.org)
- After School & Summer Program (Ronni Sherbin), [summer@amaremontessori.org](mailto:summer@amaremontessori.org)
- Spanish & Drama (Elizabeth Coleman), [ecoleman@amaremontessori.org](mailto:ecoleman@amaremontessori.org)
- Creative Arts Director (Julie Rullmann), [creativearts@amaremontessori.org](mailto:creativearts@amaremontessori.org)
- Student Support Coordinator (Courtney Hester), [chester@amaremontessori.org](mailto:chester@amaremontessori.org)
- Operations Manager & Fitness (Brittany Lynch), [blynch@amaremontessori.org](mailto:blynch@amaremontessori.org)
- Head of School (Jaime Yeager), [jyeager@amaremontessori.org](mailto:jyeager@amaremontessori.org)

Please contact the Operations Manager via email or the school phone regarding the following topics:

- School uniform information
- Dates and times for school events (after consulting your Amare calendar)
- Tuition/ParentsWeb/ Transparent Classroom Account questions
- T-shirt sales



- Scheduling classroom observations
- After Care Tickets/Availability/Billing

Please contact the Head of School via email or phone regarding the following topics:

- Philosophical or programming inquiries
- Enrollment process/information
- Class placement
- Support services
- Fundraising/Donations
- Staffing/Licensing/Accreditation

#### 7.7.4 Communication Avenues

- **Parent Information Meetings (PIMs) and Link to the Classroom (LTCs)** are pivotal to your understanding of Montessori philosophy and curriculum. Each PIM will be unique and will help you understand your child's developmental and academic progress. At these important meetings, parents will meet your child's teachers and learn about the classroom routine, program objectives, daily schedules, and current classroom events. Childcare is provided at no cost. Additionally, an annually Montessori Journey is scheduled in the falloff each school year.
- Weekly Friday Folders (sent home on Fridays and returned to school each Monday). These folders will contain work, notices from school and extra-curricular programs.
- Weekly e-News sent via e-mail from the office and each classroom
- Progress Reports:
  - Toddler Students: approximately every four months
  - Primary 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Level Students: two times a year
  - Primary 3<sup>rd</sup> Level and Elementary Students: three times a year
- **Two Parent Conference Days** – scheduled twice a year. There is no school on these days. Childcare is provided at no charge during your scheduled conference time. An optional third meeting is available at year's end by parent or teacher request.
- Other conferences with the teachers as needed by parent or teacher, throughout the year.
- Classroom Observations are highly encouraged. They can be scheduled through the front office. (See next section.)

### 7.8 Classroom Observations

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Please invest an hour in the **fall** (after your child has been enrolled for 6-8 weeks) and the **spring** of each school year to observe your child's classroom. Observations are scheduled for 45 minutes and a discussion can occur afterward with the Head of School, if desired. To set up an observation:

- Attend the Parent Information Meeting on Observation (offered yearly) or meet with the Head of School for an orientation on Classroom Observation.

Then,

- Contact the office to schedule a date/time for the observation. After the visit, you may schedule a follow-up conference with the teacher to discuss your observations, if you wish.
- Please check-in at the office before your scheduled observation time. The office staff will give you a form to aid in your observation of the classroom and a "Visitor's Badge" to wear.
- Your child's teachers will have an "Observation Chair." Please do not sit with your child during this time. You need to be free to watch the entire classroom.
- Remember that observations are not a time for a parent teacher conference.

## 7.9 Time Management/Homework Policy

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### Time Management (Elementary)

All of our Primary and Elementary classrooms have a 3 hour uninterrupted work time each morning. We feel strongly that if a student works hard during his work time at school that he/she should not have to spend the entire evening working on homework. Just like adults, students need time with their families in the evening in order to be refreshed and ready to work hard again the next morning.

Each LE student has a daily or weekly plan and is given time to plan his day. He chooses the best time to accomplish each assignment. A teacher will check the work that has been finished, provide lessons and help as needed. Unfinished work must become a priority the following day.

The student who is able to mentally plan his day is also able to survey and reflect on how much he is accomplishing. The Montessori philosophy of flexibility is accomplished when the student is choosing the order or sequence of the work assignment – enjoying either the fun or stimulation of doing a favorite subject first or saving the best until last by getting the most difficult subject out of the way. This is one of the ways the Montessori student becomes increasingly responsible, motivated and self-confident.

Make time management a part of your family meetings. Let your child set goals for daily routines. This is especially helpful in the morning. If he needs more time to prepare for the day, then he can get up earlier. If he needs less time, he can sleep longer. By empowering your child, you can eliminate many family conflicts.

### Homework Policy

**LE:** Daily homework includes: daily **shared** and independent reading. An established, designated daily reading time is critical to your child's academic progress. Your child should read a book on his/her reading level. The book parents read to their child should be several grade levels above his/her reading level in order to build excitement, vocabulary and imagination. We suggest finding time each week for silent reading as a family with each member reading something in the same room.

**UE:** Homework assignments involving additional practice with reading, spelling/word study, writing, and library research will be expected for reinforcement of these skills, as needed. The Montessori 3 hour morning work cycle allows most students the time to complete assignments during the school day, although some project-based assignments may need to be finished at home. If a student brings home an excessive number of unfinished assignments, the parent should ask the teacher whether the student is using his/her time wisely at school.

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## 7.10 Field Trips (Elementary Only)

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### 7.10.1 Field Trip Guidelines

- Each field trip will require a written permission slip and the appropriate fee to be paid by a date designated on the permission slip.
- Each chaperone/driver must be able to take at least 3 seat-belted students. Younger siblings are not permitted on field trips.
- NO STUDENT WILL BE PERMITTED TO RIDE IN A SEAT EQUIPPED WITH AN AIR BAG.
- **All students must bring the appropriate car/booster seat that meets state regulations or use a school provided car seat.**
- Car assignments are arranged by the teachers, are filed in the office, and must be adhered to until students return to school, except in a case of an emergency.
- Field trips are cancelled if enough drivers are not available.

Tennessee's passenger child restraint law is covered in Tennessee Code Annotated 55-9-602. The part that relates to our students on field trips states that any child four through eight years of age **and** measuring less than four feet nine inches (4' 9") must be in a "belt positioning booster seat system" and in the rear seat if the vehicle has a rear seat. Students not required by law to be in a booster seat must still be secured with a safety belt.

### 7.10.2 Chaperones/Field Trip Driver Responsibilities

- Field Trip Drivers must pass a background check, provide proof of a valid driver's license, and current vehicle insurance. *If you plan to volunteer as a driver please alert the office so that a background check can be arranged.*
- Supervising and safeguarding the students in your care is your primary responsibility!
- Arrive at school at least 15 minutes in advance of our scheduled departure time to allow time to get organized and get the children safely into their designated cars.
- Chaperones **may not** leave their group and must always eat with their designated students.
- Do not use your mobile phones during the trip unless it is related to the field trip.
- **Do not stop for food or drinks** because it is unfair to children in other cars.
- Escort your children back to their classroom and stay with them until the teacher arrives.

## 7.11 Snow Day Policy

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For notice of school closings, watch the TV stations listed below:

- TV channels: 2, 4, 5
- If school will be closed for inclement weather, Amare Montessori will also:
  - send an email
  - post to the Amare Families private Facebook page
  - send an alert via the Remind app (to sign up go to [www.remind.com/join/amarem](http://www.remind.com/join/amarem))

Please do not call the office if you need to pick up your child early due to weather conditions. Rather, simply do so. In inclement weather we do not have the staff manpower to both answer calls and retrieve children who are being picked up early.

We try to avoid unnecessary closings by waiting until early morning to make the decision and announcement. The safety of your family is most important, thus, please use your best judgment about bringing your student late, picking him/her up early, or just staying home on those troublesome days. If the weather worsens as the day progresses and we have to close early, we will announce the closing time on our Amare Families Facebook page, Remind, email, and the TV stations listed above.

## 7.12 Videotaping School Programs/Events

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We encourage you to take pictures and videos of *your own children* as a record of their growth and accomplishments through their years at Amare Montessori. We have families in the school whose privacy is extremely important from the standpoint of safety. We are extremely careful about publicizing pictures or information about these families, which is why we use a formal photo release form. We ask that you bear this in mind when videotaping performances. You may post pictures of *your own children* on the internet (YouTube, Facebook, etc.) at your discretion. However, please do not post pictures of children of other families to any of these websites without the parent's permission.

## 7.13 Religion and Amare Montessori

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Eileen Bernstorf founded Montessori Academy, Amare's parent school, in 1985 and its roots go back to 1967. Montessori Academy has always had a very diverse student and family body based on race, ethnicity, and religion. This has not been an accident but has been intentional. The Bernstorf family has a long Christian heritage, but has chosen to build and develop a school that is focused on Montessori philosophy and not a particular creed, belief systems, or religious doctrine. That is not in any way to diminish the value of those things in the lives of the families who are a part of our school community. Instead it values those things enough to not let them become divisive issues that stand in the way of educating children within an authentic Montessori framework.

While the underlying values of the school come from a Judeo-Christian worldview, it is the policy of Amare Montessori to not make accommodations for any specific religion or manifestation of that religion on campus by students or faculty during the school day. That includes dress, observances, or special days that are specific for any religion. We value those religious and cultural values that bring meaning to people's lives, but the campus of Amare Montessori will continue to be a place where our focus is on educating children; not on being a battleground where the cultural conflicts present in the United States and the world are fought out.

# 8. CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

## 8.1 Entering the Classrooms During School Hours

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If you are volunteering in a classroom or observing in a classroom during school hours, please check-in first at the office. All parents, visitors, and volunteers need to sign-in at the office.

## 8.2 Lunch and Snack

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### 8.2.1 Lunch

A **lunch box** is required for each child having lunch at school. Lunch boxes should be free of all characters and logos. Simple designs and solid colors are preferred. ***We ask for a trash free lunch.*** Any non-compostable trash will be placed back in the child's lunch box to be disposed of at home. Containers should be reusable and easy for students to open by themselves. Lunches may be kept cool by putting a frozen cool pack in the lunch box. Please write your child's food allergies on the top of his/her lunch box with a permanent marker.

Each child is allowed approximately 20-30 minutes to eat his/her lunch each day. Children will bring home, in the lunchbox, uneaten items so parents are able to adjust lunch proportions appropriately.

We encourage parents to send lunches that reflect good nutrition when preparing lunches. A nutritious lunch means one that provides nutritional value in addition to calories. We ask for your support as we establish and maintain healthy habits. Keep in mind that the lunch should include protein as well as be nutritional in terms of vitamins and minerals. Meat, casseroles, soups, rice and vegetables can be sent in a small thermos.

**Please refer to the following lunch suggestions and have your child choose something from each category daily for their lunch:**

Protein:	Cheese, meats, tuna, nut butter, Greek yogurt, boiled eggs, nuts, hummus, legumes
Grains:	Whole grain breads, bagels, pita, crackers, tortillas, pasta, lentils, quinoa
Veggies/Fruits:	Carrots, celery, peppers, cauliflower, broccoli, salad, tomatoes, cucumbers, apples, oranges, bananas, peaches, pears, raisins, or dried fruit

**Kindly refrain from sending the following items to school for lunch:**

- Jell-O, push-up yogurt, pudding, anything with chocolate chips, cupcakes, frosted cookies, sugar-coated cereals, candy, chewing gum, Frito's, Cheetos's, or similar high-calorie low-nutrition foods. Any food with more than 9 grams of sugar per serving is not permitted.

### 8.2.2 **Snack and the Sharing Basket**

Each family provides snack for the entire classroom through the Sharing Basket during the school year; thus, your child gets to enjoy nutritious snacks all year. Your classroom teachers will let you know which week has been assigned to you and will provide you with a shopping list when it is your family's turn to provide the Sharing Basket. Please bring the complete Sharing Basket on Monday morning no later than 8:00 am. This provides ample time for it to be unloaded and snack prepared for the day. Other shared and consumable items may be requested in the sharing basket occasionally. The cost varies by classroom but the average cost should be between \$50 and \$75 each time.

### 8.2.3 **Afternoon Snack**

If your child stays for After School Care at any level, please send a snack in your child's Amare snack pouch, marked with your child's name. Each child will receive a snack pouch yearly. Replacement pouches are \$5.00 and can be requested through the front office.

## 8.3 Dress Code and Personal Items

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### 8.3.1 Dress Code

**Please help your child learn to dress him/herself** at home so he/she can do it at school as well. Primary students should dress themselves daily. Students should dress in clothing that does not

bring undue attention to them or distract the classroom. Thus, all students are required to follow the dress code.

Children do occasionally have accidents, spill something on their clothing, or soil it while gardening. For these reasons we require that every child have a complete change of clothing at school (see below). Daily clothing worn to school as well as the change of clothes should follow these guidelines:

- **Shirts:** Solid colored collared shirts (any color) that are free from ALL distracting images, designs and all licensed characters and cartoons and embroidered with the Amare logo. Onesies and leotards are not permitted to be worn at school.
- **Dresses:** Girls may wear solid-colored, logoed polo dresses as long as they do not zip in the back, as they are impossible for students to manage and should not be worn.
- **Pants/Shorts/Skirts:** Solid colored pants, shorts or skirts may be worn.
  - All clothes should be easy for children to take off when using the restroom. Pants with elastic waistbands for toddlers and primary students are encouraged, until mastery of buttons, zippers and snaps are acquired. "Onesies" are not permitted at any level.
  - Please note: Leggings are NOT considered pants. Leggings are to be worn ONLY with dresses and skirts.
  - Only Elementary students may wear belts.
- **Shoes:** All shoes should be comfortable, close-toed and provide safety when the child runs, climbs and plays on the playground.
  - Cowboy boots, "light up shoes," "squeaky shoes," cleats, and shoes with wheels may not be worn to school, as they are a distraction in the classroom and can pose a safety hazard.

#### ***Friday Attire:***

- Every Friday students may wear jeans with their Amare T-shirts. Elementary teachers may also elect to have students wear their Amare T-shirts on field trips. T-shirt orders occur annually in the summer/early fall and again in the winter. Extra forms may be requested from the office.

#### ***Change of Clothes:***

- Please send extra clothes in a gallon-sized Ziploc bag labeled with the child's name to be left at school. Re-useable wet bags are encouraged for Primary and Toddler students (will be kept in the back and forth bag).
- If your child has had an accident, replace the clothing in a Ziploc bag the very next day. (Make sure your child always has a change of clothes at school.) If we cannot find a change of clothes, extras may be used and must be returned.
- As the weather changes, please send a new set of weather appropriate clothes.

#### ***Rain Coats and Rain Boots:***

- All students are required to have raincoats and rain boots that remain at school for the duration of the school year. All items should be labeled with the child's name or initials and free from ALL distracting images, designs and all licensed characters and cartoons.

### **8.3.2 Personal Items**

- Children may not bring, or wear makeup or perfume to school. Wearing jewelry is discouraged for safety reasons and the possibility of it getting lost or broken. However, small post earrings are permitted.

- All students' hair should be neat, clean, and conservatively styled so that it does not interfere with their schoolwork. Longer hair is more easily maintained when braided, in a ponytail or held back with a headband or barrette. Mohawks, dyed hair and other attention drawing hairstyles should be avoided on school days.
- **Please label all personal items brought to school** (books, coats, sweaters, mittens, winter hats, changes of clothing, etc.).
- Backpacks or overnight bags are permitted only if the child is spending the night elsewhere. Dance or sports bags are permitted when the child goes directly to dance or practice/games from school. These bags may be left in the office, with the student's name, as there is not room in the classrooms for these items.

#### **Items that may not be brought/worn to School or After School Programs:**

- Pants worn below the waist
- Shoes with built-in roller skates, roller blades or roller skates of any kind, or skateboards
- Hats, scarves, caps and sunglasses (may be worn outside in appropriate weather, but are not permitted to be worn inside)
- Trading cards (Pokémon, Harry Potter, etc.) and other related items, games, and toys
- Music players, hand-held and/or lap-top computers, hand-held video games, any electronic device or gadgets, iPods, iPads, or cameras (cameras may be permitted on some field trips if the teachers grant permission)
- Money (unless given directly to a teacher for a field trip)
- Chewing gum and candy
- Umbrellas

## **8.4 School Day Enrichments**

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### **8.4.1 Fitness (Elementary)**

**Fitness** is our daily morning movement activities and incorporates multiple forms of exercise and physical activity in a group setting, enabling the children to engage in true exercise and improve their health. Care of our bodies, including discussion of proper nutrition and positive mindset, are a focus.

**Medical Conditions** – If a student has a medical problem such as an allergy or asthma, please send a detailed explanation to the office with multiple copies (with your signature) for your child's classroom teacher and each of the other teachers with symptoms and warning signs and appropriate measures to be taken should an emergency occur. Please make sure to add your emergency phone numbers to the note and please keep the numbers current.

If a student breaks a piece of fitness equipment because of purposeful misuse or abuse, she will replace it.

### **8.4.2 Language**

Spanish language instruction is incorporated at all levels, Toddler through Elementary. Students will be exposed daily to Spanish within their classroom setting. Elementary students will receive formal lessons that build upon vocabulary and conversational exposure.

### **8.4.3 Art**

Elementary students attend art classes each week. Art shows each year will showcase the fabulous work of all students. This thorough curriculum is presented in a three-year cycle and explores visual art from various historic periods and art forms from around the world. Children will receive their portfolio at the end of year.

#### 8.4.4 Music

Students at Amare Montessori experience music in every level. In our Toddler and Primary classrooms, our teachers provide exposure to various musical genres, singing, simple instruments and introductory musical terms and vocabulary. Third year Primary and elementary students will extend these lessons with weekly lessons in choral music, including instruction in reading music and vocal dynamics, rhythm and exposure to a variety of musical genres and instruments.

#### 8.4.5 Drama

Elementary students will have weekly instruction in Drama. Theatrical performance, set design, costumes and production will be focused on throughout the year, culminating in a spring performance.

### 8.5 After School Programs

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After School Care (ASC) is offered for all levels daily from 3:15-5:15 pm. Parents have the option of paying for an entire month when tuition is paid or purchasing occasional use tickets through the office. Please contact the office with any questions or concerns regarding After School programming.

Students must be signed out of After School. Your child will only be released to people on the authorized pick up list. You may update your pick-up/emergency contact list by emailing or calling the office or in Transparent Classroom.

After School Programs are not offered on half days. All other days, After School Programs close at 5:15 p.m. at which point After Care staff are ready to leave campus. If there is an emergency and you anticipate arriving after 5:15 p.m., please call the office as soon as possible. Habitual lateness will result in a call from the Head of School and the possible suspension of After School program privileges. A late fee of \$25 will be charged if parent arrives after 5:15 p.m.

### 8.6 Private Music Lessons

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A variety of Extra-Curricular Activities are offered for additional fees for Third Level Primary students and older. Unless otherwise indicated by reduction of fees for certain months, club teachers generally make up missed lessons at their convenience, rather than reduce the monthly fee. **Students not picked up at the end of the activity will automatically be sent to the age appropriate After School Program,** and the parent will be billed if the student is not enrolled in the After School Care program.

To sign up for extra-curricular activities:

1. Complete the enrollment form(s). Find them on the Community page of our website.
2. Submit payment to the instructor.
3. In order to drop an activity, written notice must be given to the instructor.

### 8.7 Birthday Celebrations

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Please speak with your child's teacher to discuss how your classroom celebrates birthdays and to schedule a celebration.

Montessori schools throughout the nation observe a child's birthday with a "Celebration of Life" ceremony. You may help us celebrate your child's birthday by contacting your classroom teacher and planning an appropriate celebration that fits the needs of your child and their classroom.

**Toddler:** Birthday celebrations are kept purposefully low key in the Toddler environment, so as not to disrupt the rhythm of the day.

**Party Invitations** may be brought to school to be placed in the child's Friday folder ONLY IF all children in the class are invited. **We are not authorized to distribute parent e-mail addresses, but you may consult the directory in Parents Web.**

## 8.8 Use of Computers

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Computers are available for Upper Elementary students to use in the classrooms once they have demonstrated proficiency with print materials. The Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy is included in the Appendix of this Handbook and outlines expectations and guidelines. Elementary students must have a signed agreement on file prior to using school computers. Refusal to abide by the rules will result in loss of computer use privileges.



## Elementary Computer Usage Agreement

In the Elementary, computers are an important part of the teaching and learning process. They are used for research on the Internet, report writing and production, and as a part of the practice and learning process in math and science. This computer policy is put in place to protect the computer systems, the functionality of the classrooms, and to maintain a classroom environment that is both productive and healthy. Net Nanny is maintained on all student computers to block unhealthy sites on the Internet but it should be understood that no program can be 100% perfect in that area. Students must comply with the following policies:

- Students are to access computer programs or areas of the Internet only with the direct permission of the teacher.
- No computer settings are to be changed by students including screen savers, desktops, menu bars, etc.
- Students are not to interfere with other students working on a computer or tamper with their files.
- Students are only to use computers or print material that is directly school related.
- If a computer is not working properly or files are not printing, the teacher should be asked for help.

***If a student does not abide by these policies, he/she will temporarily lose the privilege of using computers at school***

*I agree to the above listed policies for computer usage:*

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Student / Date

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Parent/Guardian / Date



## Acknowledgment of Amare Montessori's Policies & Procedures

We are delighted to have your family with us for the school year!

Please take time to read through your Parent Handbook carefully. Sign this form and return it to your child's room. By doing this, we are assured that you have indeed received this important communication from Amare Montessori. Thank you for returning this form to your child's classroom by Parent Orientation.

**ALL Parent Response:** *I have read and understand all of the policies and procedures contained in the "Amare Montessori Parent Handbook," including enrollment and dis-enrollment procedures, and I will abide by them.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent or Guardian Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student's Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Classroom

**All Parents please read and sign:**

*I have received the handout on "Child Abuse and Neglect" and the "Summary of Child Care Approval Requirements."*

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL Parents please read and sign:**

*I am aware that Amare Montessori is required by DOE regulations to implement a personal safety curriculum with all primary students and elementary students who regularly attend after school care students. Amare utilizes the Second Step curriculum and it is available in the office for my review.*

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### A.3 Toilet Training – Toddler Students

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The Montessori approach to toilet mastery is unique. We observe and follow the child's interest. Often toilet training is accomplished early, at age 18 to 24 months, not due to pressure from adults, but rather because the child is more open to the experience at that time.

**Toilet mastery is accomplished most easily with preparation that begins far in advance of the time when the child is ready.**

Around the age of 12 months children often become quite interested in the bathroom. They want to explore, play with the water in toilets, and may persistently follow their parents when they go into the bathroom. These are early signs of the child's first interest in toilet training.

By the age of 15 months, children often show interest in wearing underpants. Many become fascinated with the process of dressing and undressing and may undress themselves when it is least expected. It is not uncommon for children of this age to try on their older siblings' or parents' underpants. What may seem to be simply cute or attention getting behavior is probably another indication that they are becoming curious about using the toilet.

Between 13 and 15 months, many children will want to sit on the toilet or a potty chair in imitation of their parents and siblings, even though they may not yet have learned to control their bladder or bowel. At this point, parents can easily begin to introduce young children to the entire toileting routine: pulling down their pants, sitting on the toilet, correctly wiping their bottoms, pulling their pants up, flushing, and washing their hands. Most children will easily master this routine, just as they learn so many other practical life skills in the Montessori classroom.

Allow children to experiment with flushing the toilet and when you sense that they are curious explain body functions to them. Respond to their questions with clear honest answers appropriate to their level of understanding. "Everybody poops. It's normal. It's our body's way of getting rid of that part of our food that it doesn't need."

It is best that parents be comfortable and prepared for this process. They need to be very patient and reassuring when a child has an accident. Underpants should be stored on a low shelf, in a cubby, or in an easily accessible drawer so the child can get them for him/herself as needed. A hamper should be provided for wet underpants and towels used for the cleanup. The parent can be encouraging and can prepare the environment to support the child when he/she is ready by:

- Using cotton training pants.
- Allowing access to the bathroom.
- Providing an appropriate way for the child to explore both the use of the toilet and to play with water.
- Offering a patient explanation of body functions.
- Providing old towels for cleaning up accidents.
- Providing gentle understanding when accidents do occur.

Clothing should be manageable for the child—loose shirts and socks, elastic waist pants, Velcro shoes or slip-on shoes. The child is soon capable of dressing and undressing with little assistance.

## A.4 Recommended Reading for Parents and Grandparents of Montessori Students

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Highly recommended for all parents:

Author	Titles
Montessori, Maria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>From Childhood to Adolescence</i></li><li>• <i>The Absorbent Mind</i></li><li>• <i>The Secret of Childhood</i></li><li>• <i>To Educate the Human Potential</i></li><li>• <i>The Discovery of the Child</i></li></ul>
Lillard, Paula Polk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Montessori: A Modern Approach</i></li><li>• <i>Montessori Today: A Comprehensive Approach to Education from Birth to Adulthood</i></li><li>• <i>Montessori from the Start</i></li></ul>
Nelson, Jane	<i>Positive Discipline A-Z, Revised and Expanded 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: From Toddlers to Teens, 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems</i>
Covey, Stephen R & Covey, Sandra Merrill	<i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families: Building a Beautiful Family Culture in a Turbulent World</i>
Eissler, Trevor	<i>Montessori Madness</i>
Faber, Adele, Mazlish, Elaine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk</i></li><li>• <i>Siblings without Rivalry</i></li></ul>
Kohn, Alfie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>No Contest: The Case Against Competition</i></li><li>• <i>Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community</i></li><li>• <i>Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise &amp; Bribes</i></li><li>• <i>The Homework Myth</i></li><li>• <i>The Schools Children Deserve</i></li></ul>
Levine, Mel	<i>The Myth of Laziness</i>
Lillard, Angeline	<i>The Science Behind the Genius</i>
Louv, Richard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>The Last Child in the Woods</i></li><li>• <i>Vitamin N</i></li></ul>
Nelson, Jane, Glenn, H. Stephen	<i>Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World: Seven Building Blocks for Developing Capable Young People</i>
Schmidt, Maren	<i>Understanding Montessori</i>
Seldin, Tim	<i>How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way</i>

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## A.5 Summary of TN Department of Education Rules and Regulations

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### Standards for School-administered Child Care, Chapter 0520-12-01 SUMMARY, provided by the TNDOE

#### Program Organization and Administration, 0520-12-01-.05

- A Child Care Center must have an adequate budget. General liability, automobile liability, and medical payment insurances must be maintained on all properties and vehicles owned or operated by the program.
- Children's files must include a complete application, an official immunization record (exceptions do apply), and health history.
- On-going parent communication is expected. Programs must provide a parent handbook with the policies, procedures, and the TDOE requirements, chapter 0520-12-01. It is expected that parents sign for receipt of the policies and requirements, and this would be kept in the child's file. All parents shall be given a pre-placement visit opportunity.
- Parents must have access to all areas of the center when their child is present.
- The parents must receive an educational program regarding child abuse detection, reporting and prevention.
- A written plan must be in place for the release of each child, this should include individuals who are allowed to pick up the child at the end of the day or any given time by the parent.
- Children must be signed out of the program by the custodial parent. Staff may require to see a person's identification when releasing a child from the program.
- Injuries and incidences will be reported to the parent as soon as possible or at the end of the school day. This shall be documented in the child's file.
- Staff records must be kept on each employee that includes educational background, reference checks, TBI check, in-service training, physical exams and performance reviews.
- If the center provides transportation, the driver should be appropriately licensed, have a drug screening on file, and certificate of CPR/First Aid, there must be liability insurance and the children must have adequate space and supervision. Transportation provided by the center or under center authorization shall comply with state law.
- Programs must have the current Certificate of Approval posted where parents and visitors can easily see it, along with the Department of Human Services childcare complaint number and the Department of Children's Services Child Abuse Hotline number.
- No smoking must also be posted in a conspicuous manner.
- A copy of the state board rules (chapter 0520-12-01) must be maintained in a central space and available to all staff and parents.

#### Program Operation (Supervision), 0520-12-01-.06

- Careful supervision of each group is expected at all times and suited appropriately for each age grouping.
- Adult: child ratios and group sizes must be followed.

##### Single-age grouping chart:

AGE	GROUP SIZE	ADULT: CHILD RATIO
Infant (6wks-12 m)	8	1:4
Toddler (11m-23m)	12	1:6
Two (2) years old	14	1:7
Three (3) years old	18	1:9
Four (4) years old	20	1:13

##### Multi-age grouping chart:

AGE	GROUP SIZE	ADULT:CHILD RATIO
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Infant – 18 months	8	1:4
18 – 36 months	16	1:8
3 – 4 years old only	20	1:10
3 – 6 years old*	24	1:13

\*Not including first grade children

- Group sizes must be maintained in the classroom, but classes may combine while outdoors, in common dining areas, or common napping areas.
- Each group must have their own space. Infants cannot be group with children older than 30 months; a separate area must be provided for infants and toddlers.
- At naptime, ratios may be relaxed for groups (except for infants and toddlers).
- A written playground supervision plan is required.
- Field trips requires adult: child ratios to be doubled. Swimming has a separate ratio chart and the lifeguard is not included in the ratio.

#### **Staff, 0520-12-01-.07**

- All programs must have a director and enough teachers and staff to meet the required ratios for adequate supervision.
- Staff must be physically, mentally and emotionally stable to work with children and have knowledge of early childhood behaviors and development.
- Teachers and assistant teachers must be 21 years of age if hired after June 30, 2017. Any staff member under the age of 21 must be supervised by an adult, except for before and after school programs.
- All new staff must complete 2 hours of orientation before assuming duties and receive annual instruction in early childhood topics that are required in this chapter section.
- The program must maintain written documentation that each employee has read the full set of all rules.
- A copy of the entire rules must be maintained and readily accessible to all employees.
- All staff must have a criminal background check upon hiring and must be cleared before assuming duties. A new fingerprint sample is required every 5 years for all employees.
- A director shall be responsible for the day-to-day operations, shall be physically present in the facility for at least half the hours of operation, be at least 21 years of age, and follow the qualification guidelines listed in this chapter section.
- An assistant director may be designated in charge when the director is absent.
- All directors, assistant directors, teachers, assistant teachers, and other staff working directly with the children must have professional development training. 24 hours is required for the 2017/2018 school year and 30 hours is required for the 2018/2019 school year and beyond. At least 6 hours of this professional development must be in developmentally appropriate literacy practices.

#### **Program, 0520-12-01-.09**

- Educational activity must be developmentally appropriate for the age and ability of the children enrolled. (See TN-ELDS for Birth-48 Months and TN-ELDS for 48 month-Kindergarten)
- Any technology used by the children must be reviewed by staff, approved by parents, and shall not exceed 2 hours per day.
- Children shall not be left in restraining devices (swings, car seats, high chairs, etc.) for periods longer than 30 minutes.
- Children should have opportunities to play together and also alone when they choose to do so.
- Personal safety must be taught each year for children ages 3 years through school age.
- Outdoor play must be provided for all ages that are in care for more than 3 daylight hours, weather permitting (temp ranges 32-95 degrees).
- Behavior management and discipline must be reasonable and age appropriate. Spanking or other corporal punishment is not allowed. Timeout must be based on the age of the child and take place in an appropriate location.
- Children shall not be in care for longer than 12 hours in a day.
- Routines such as snack, meals, and res shall occur at approximately the same time each day.

### **Health and Safety, 0520-12-01-.10**

- A first aid kit must be on the premises and a comprehensive first aid chart or list must be available.
- A staff member must be present at all times who has a current certification in CPR and first aid training.
- A written plan to protect children during disasters is required. Drills must be practiced and documented each month. At least one drill must be practiced during extended care hours.
- Smoking and the consumption of alcohol are not allowed on the premises of a childcare program.
- Firearms are not allowed on the premises or in a vehicle used to transport children.
- Kitchen knives or other potentially hazardous tools must be kept inaccessible to children.
- Staff's personal belongings must be kept inaccessible to children.
- Emergency contact numbers must be listed and posted near all telephones.
- Conduct regular morning health checks of each child and notify parents immediately when a child is sick or injured.
- Medication may not be given to any child without the written consent of the parent/guardian.
- Safe sleep practices for infants must be followed:
  - Infants placed on their back to sleep, in a crib or pack 'n play with only the sheet. Soft bedding for infants is not allowed.
  - No swaddling or wrapping in a blanket.
  - Infants must be touched by a teacher every 15 minutes to check breathing and body temperature.
  - Infant room teachers must have SIDS and safe sleep training before reporting for duty.
- Hand washing and diapering procedures must be followed to minimize the spread of germs in the classrooms.
- Developmentally appropriate equipment that is in good repair and easily cleaned is required. All manufacturer's safety instructions must be followed.
- Electrical cords and outlets should be inaccessible to the children.
- Children must have a place to store their belongings that minimizes the spread of germs.
- Each child must have their own napping equipment (2" thick mat or cot; sheet or cover for the mat; and a coverlet for their body)
- All staff must report reasonable suspicions of child abuse to DCS hotline number or local law enforcement. Annual training for this is required.

### **Food, 0520-12-01-.11**

- Children will receive meals based on the amount of hours spent in the program.
- Food should not be forced or withheld from children.
- Infants must be held while bottle feeding and bottles may not be heated in the microwave.
- Special diets and instructions must be provided in writing.
- A menu must be posted each week. Changes to the meal must be documented before the meal occurs.
- Teachers and children must wash hand when handling and eating food.
- All eating surfaces must be washed with soapy water and sanitized before eating and after eating.
- Children must be seated at appropriately sized tables. Adults must closely supervise them while eating.
- Milk must be placed in the refrigerator immediately after it is served. All formulas remaining in bottles after feeding must be discarded.
- Highchair manufacturer's restraints must be used.
- Food must be properly handled and stored to protect from contamination.
- Milk and perishable food must not sit on the table longer than 15 minutes before being served.

### **Physical Facilities, 0520-12-01-.12**

- All facilities must pass an annual fire inspection and health inspection.
- A working telephone is required.
- A minimum of 30 square feet of usable indoor play space for each child is required.
- The area must be clean and safe for the children to use.



- A minimum of 50 square feet per child is required outdoors.
- The outdoor area must be fenced.
- Outdoor play equipment must be age appropriate for the group of children.
- Outdoor equipment must be placed to avoid injury and have a proper amount of resilient surfacing material to cushion a fall.
- The outdoor playground must be properly maintained with a written playground maintenance plan. A pre-play inspection is required before children play outdoors.
- Drinking water shall be provided in all occupied rooms.
- Adequate temperature must be maintained in all classrooms.
- Classroom pets must be kept in a clean cage and kept away from food storage or food preparation areas.

#### **Transportation, 0520-12-01-.13**

- All transportation laws must be followed at all times and are defined in State board of education Pupil Transportation Rule 0520-01-05-.01 (2).
- Liability insurance coverage is required on all vehicles.
- 15 passenger vans are strictly prohibited.
- Proper child passenger restraints are to be used when transporting children in passenger vehicles.
- All school bus drivers must be properly licensed, have received a background check through the department, complete an annual physical and mental exam, complete annual school bus driving training, and complete CPR certification.
- Adult monitors in addition to the driver may be needed to properly supervise children while in route.
- Passenger logs must be kept and inspection of vehicles at the end of the route is required to insure no child is left inside.

#### **Care of Children with Special Needs, 0520-12-01-.14**

- When children with special needs are enrolled, all reasonable and appropriate efforts shall be made to provide those children equal opportunity to participate in the same program activities as their peers.
- Adaptations to the environment shall be directed toward normalizing the lifestyle of the child with a disability by helping him/her become independent and develop self-help skills.
- The program shall inform parents of any specialized services available from the program, and if the program is aware of any specialized services available through third parties, shall additionally inform the parent of such services.
- Governing agency shall develop policies and procedures, in accordance with 0520-01-09-.23, governing personnel authorized to use isolation and restraint, training requirements and incident reporting procedures.

#### **School-Age Before and After School Programs 0520-12-01-.15**

- All staff shall be 18 years of age.
- Professional development training hours are required: 18 hours for directors and 12 hours for staff.
- Ratio for Kindergarten-12 years old is 1:20 and for 13 years and older is 1:30.
- Ratio and group size requirements when pre-k is enrolled in the program

AGE	Group Size	Adult: Child Ratio
Including 3 year olds	15	1:10
Including 4 year olds	20	1:12

**COMPLAINT HOTLINE: (LONG DISTANCE) 1-800-462-8261  
(NASHVILLE AREA) 615-313-4820**

## A.6 Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse

Below are indicators of child abuse and neglect, please note that the signs in each category may pertain to one or more types of abuse or neglect. If you suspect abuse, please call the Tennessee toll free **Child Abuse Hotline** at **1-877-237-0004**.

### Signs of Sex Abuse

- Soreness or bruising, pain or itching in genital or anal areas
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Nightmares or bedwetting
- Unexplained loss of appetite
- Becoming isolated or withdrawn
- Excessive masturbation or sexual play
- Abuses children, animals or pets
- Attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment
- Obsession with pornography or viewing sexually explicit photos
- Repeated runaway or suicide attempts
- Self-destructive behavior/self-injury/cutting, risky or delinquent behavior
- Substance abuse

### Signs for Sexual Exploitation of Minors

- History or presence of emotional, sexual, or other physical abuse
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of homelessness; no identification and runaway
- Inexplicable appearance of expensive gifts, clothing, or other costly items
- Presence of an older boy-/girlfriend
- Evidence of drug use
- Possesses multiple phones and hotel room cards
- Repeated statement of urgent need to leave or get back home



### Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained fractures or injuries
- Previous injuries in various healing stages
- Patterned injuries consistent with objects of abuse (cigarettes, belt, hands)
- Burns on extremities, buttocks or genitals
- Frightened of or shrink at approach of adult caregiver
- Emotional turmoil (anxiety, depressed, suicidal); developmental delays
- Self-isolation or undue aggression
- Fear of going home; many school absences
- Abuses animals or pets

### Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Anxiety, depression or humility
- Constant belittling, shaming, and humiliation
- Developmental delays; failure to thrive



### Signs of Neglect

- Abandonment or reports that there is no one at home to provide care
- Constant hunger or begs or steals food for money; signs of malnutrition
- Abuses alcohol or drugs
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather or clothes are filthy
- Neglected personal hygiene (body odor, matted hair)
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Untreated medical issues

### *Amare Personal Safety Policy*

The Department of Education requires that children be taught personal safety as a deterrent to child abuse. In addition to using the state provided curriculum, *Second Step*, Amare integrates those concepts in the everyday respect that is given and taught to each child.

At Amare Montessori, personal safety is taught, modeled, and reinforced on a daily basis in all classes.

Children are taught that they have a right to an undisturbed working space. They learn to prepare a space, a mat on the floor or table, on which they place the work they have chosen. They are taught and practice how to walk around a mat on the floor so that they do not violate the space of another student. They are taught what it means to respect another's chosen work. They learn to wait patiently instead of interrupting another child who is working.

Children learn to negotiate when in conflict. They learn to use words instead of body parts to express themselves. They learn to tell how they feel when another person acts in a way that shows disrespect or emotionally or physically hurts them. Adults model these negotiating skills when dealing with the behavioral differences of all children.

Children are taught to use words to protect themselves or their space. They are taught to be assertive with their words so that their message has only one meaning. Phrases that are commonly modeled are: move away, stop, you can't touch me like that, etc.

Adults in the environment ask permission before they look at a child's work, touch or move their work or possessions, or touch their bodies. Examples: May I sit in the chair next to you? May I give you a hug? May I help you move your work to a more private place? If the child declines, the adult accepts that. By extending the child this courtesy, the child learns to extend it to others.

Our experience is that these daily procedures help make strong children who know when and how to protect themselves and feel the right to do so.