

LITTLE SCHOLARS MONTESSORI
Program Handbook
2018-2019



"Discovering the Little Scholar in YOUR child"

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WHO WE ARE

Little Scholars Montessori is category 3 private school licensed by the Tennessee Department of Education, and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), a division of AdvancED.

Philosophy

The mission of Little Scholars is to enrich and educate the children enrolled in our program utilizing the Montessori Method of learning. We guide children from distraction to concentration, from dependency to self-sufficiency, and from self-centeredness to respect and concern for others. Our students will develop a desire to learn and thrive at their own pace. It is our goal to broaden this desire by encouraging YOUR little scholar to reach for academic success!

"Discovering the Little Scholar in YOUR child"

Objective

Dedicated to developing the whole child, Little Scholars follows the Montessori Method of education. The Montessori approach is focused on promoting growth in all areas of a child's development: academic, physical, social and emotional. A variety of daily activities ensures that children's needs are met during critical learning periods, when they absorb lessons more easily and more quickly than they ever will again.

The Montessori Method is based on the primary research of Maria Montessori, MD, a 20th Century pioneer of modern education philosophy. Working with children who were considered to have "mental problems", Dr. Montessori developed her own theory that the children simply were not taught what they needed to know when they needed to learn it. Her own experiments with her theory met with phenomenal success. In the process, she discovered that there is a critical learning, or sensitive, period for each level of development and it is crucial for the child to be encouraged rather than discouraged during these periods.

The child's environment is a key element of the Montessori Method. The organization of the classroom, including careful placement of learning materials, is designed to promote and nourish the periods of sensitivity. Teachers pay close attention to each child, methodically observing and evaluating them through various stages, to ensure that each child realizes his or her full potential.

Little Scholars' goals for each child in our care are to:

- Create an enriched environment that fosters learning as its own reward.
- Enable children to make their own decisions, thereby promoting independence and self discipline.

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- Encourage children to participate in class activities according to each one's interests and abilities.
 - Promote awareness and acceptance of cultural differences.
 - Exemplify good manners, mutual respect and care of the environment.
 - Teach and model appropriate methods of conflict resolution.
 - Facilitate each child's development toward his or her full potential.

CURRICULUM

Little Scholars prides itself on being a unique blend of Montessori and traditional based education. This hybrid of educational philosophies creates an environment that allows the students to develop a foundation for lifelong learning, initiative to learn new concepts based on their interests, and understand concepts in a multitude of formats. Multi-age classrooms, peer mentorship, and the Little Scholars hybrid environment are believed to be the building blocks for successful student transitions out of our school.

Little Scholars designs and implements a unique curriculum across all age groups and grade levels that meets the needs of students at an individual level. Additionally, the Little Scholars curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities for enrichment, preparing them for success at the next level. Instruction adapts to each student's learning style rather than the student having to adapt to an external teaching style. This unique environment allows students to become an active participant in learning and receive individualized, timely feedback on academic achievements by means of formal and informal assessments, exemplars, and peer coaching. Tiered curriculum and looping instruction provides students with differentiated, interdisciplinary learning materials that adapt to the ability level of the individual, allowing students to be comfortably challenged at all stages.

The Little Scholars curriculum is monitored and closely evaluated by the director to ensure instructional practices align with the school's values and beliefs. Multiple formative assessments are given to gauge student achievement and adjust instruction as needed.

ENROLLMENT

Parents will need to register students for each academic year and summer sessions at Little Scholars. Current families (returning students and siblings) are given priority enrollment during the in-house enrollment period. Once open enrollment begins, enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis. Current families are no longer given priority, and exceptions will not be made. New student registration is complete and attendance is permitted only when the online enrollment contract, registration fee, and all health records have been submitted.

Enrollment Fees

One Time Fee

Registration Fee \$100 per student must be paid to guarantee enrollment and/or waitlist placement.

Annual Fees (nursery students exempt)

Curriculum Fee \$300 per student

- o Provides Montessori and education materials throughout the school year.

Field Trip Fee \$50 per student

- o Includes the student cost of field trips, a student field trip shirt (must be worn), and staff to provide care at LSM to a limited number of students that cannot attend the scheduled field trip.

Summer hold fee \$150 applicable per summer month not attended

Late Enrollment

The one-time registration fee of \$100 will be required to enroll for all students. Additionally, the curriculum and field trip fee will be combined to a prorated amount based on the month of enrollment.

- September - December: \$200
- January – March: \$150
- April – May: \$100

**ALL fees are per student, and non-refundable*

LSM Summer

Little Scholars will run an optional summer program. Tuition will remain the same as the traditional school year for students enrolled in the summer program. Students not enrolled in the summer program, but plan on returning to Little Scholars for the next school year, will be required to pay a \$150 monthly hold fee (June and July) per student to guarantee enrollment for the next school year. Students who have not remitted summer hold fees for June and July will be placed at the bottom of the waitlist, and school semester enrollment will not be guaranteed by Little Scholars. Students will no longer be charged a recurring registration fee after the first year.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is due on the first of each month. (Post-dated checks are accepted.) If the 1st falls on a weekend or holiday, tuition is due before the 1st of the month.

Little Scholars does not accept credit/debit cards. Payments can be remitted by check, cashier's check, money order, cash, or ACH bank draft. ACH bank draft forms can be found in the annual parent packet and on the Little Scholars website. Tuition payments can be submitted by handing the payment directly to a staff member during carloop or by placing the payment in the safe found in the foyer of Little Scholars. Tuition payments should not be placed in student backpacks.

Statements for flexible spending accounts or other reasons can be printed directly from the parent portal found on the Little Scholars website. A hard copy can be provided by LS administration if necessary. Please allow 24 hours for this request.

Tuition Outline

The following is an outline of Little Scholars Montessori's tuition and fees.

The following discounts are available for total tuition cost:
10% discount for second child and 5% additional siblings.

Monthly Tuition

Please note that tuition rates are per student, per month. These tuition costs are in addition to the annual fees listed above.

Full time (Monday - Friday) 8:15am-2:45pm - \$600

Part-time (3 Days per Week) 8:15am-2:45pm - \$450

Little Scholars does not prorate tuition and does not give credits for any breaks or vacations during the school year (August-May.) An extended absence form must be completed 30 days prior to an extended absence and submitted to the office for absences of a month or longer.

In order to guarantee enrollment upon the return of a student, all tuition must be paid on time each month. Failure to pay during extended absences will result in the student being withdrawn from the program. Upon the student's return, if the space has not been filled, the student may be readmitted to the program once the outstanding balance is paid. If there is a waitlist for the classroom assigned to the student, they will be placed at the bottom of the waitlist.

Extended Care Options

Cost for Extended Care is in addition to monthly tuition and applicable per student. Extended Care cost does not vary based on full or part-time enrollment.

1. Extended Care Package (Before & After school) 6:45am-5:30pm - \$175
2. Before School Care Only (6:45am-8:15am) - \$50
3. After School Care Only (3:00pm - 5:30pm) - \$150
4. Drop in Rate- \$15
5. Holiday Care (Fall Break & Spring Break) - \$25 per week for students enrolled in the current semester of an Extended Care option for compensation of theme day instruction and/or additional materials required.

\$150 per/wk or \$30 per/day for non-extended care students (limited availability)

Variable Fees

Late Fees

Accounts with an outstanding balance as of the 2nd of each month will be assessed a \$25 late fee. Students with an outstanding balance of 10 days or more will not be permitted to attend Little Scholars until the balance is paid in full. Interest will be charged on all unpaid balances.

Return Payment Charge

A \$25 Return Charge will be assessed for all returned checks or ACH bank drafts.

Late Pick-up Fee

If pickup occurs after 5:30pm for students enrolled in After School Care, a late pick up fee of \$1.00 per minute will be billed to the parents/guardian's account in accordance with the Arrival and Dismissal Policy. Late Pick-up fees are due no later than the following attendance day of the late dismissal.

SCHEDULE

The Little Scholars office hours are weekdays from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Daily Schedule

ARRIVAL

6:45am - 8:15am - Before School Care (must be enrolled)

8:15am - 8:30am – Student drop-off

8:30am - Class begins

Nursery- PreK

8:30am-11:00am Montessori Block

Montessori Block includes:

- Montessori Lessons
- Morning Snack
- Elective Classes (Pre-K)

11:00am-11:30am – Lunch Time

11:30am-12:00pm- Transition Time

12:00pm-2:00pm – Nap Time

2:00pm - 2:30pm- Montessori Block

Elementary

8:30am-11:45am Montessori Block

Montessori Block includes:

- Montessori Lessons
- Morning Snack
- Elective Classes

11:45am-12:15pm – Lunch Time

12:15pm-12:30pm- Transition Time

12:30pm-2:30pm – Montessori Block resumes

DISMISSAL

2:45pm-3:00pm– Dismissal

3:00pm - 5:30pm -After School care (including afternoon snack)

Closure Schedule

Little Scholars follows the Clarksville Montgomery County School District's calendar of closures for major holidays and breaks. Little Scholars provides extended care on most of the system wide closed days. The LSM calendar indicates closures dates and the details of Extended Care availability. Any student that will attend a closure date with extended care available, will be required to register for attendance through the Little Scholars website no later than 1 week prior to the closure date. Students enrolled in extended care that do not register for attendance 1 week prior to the extended care date will not be permitted to attend.

If Fourth of July, Christmas, or New Year's Day falls on a Tuesday, Little Scholars will also be closed the Monday before. All other holiday closures will be posted on the Little Scholars Parent Calendar.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, Little Scholars will typically follow Clarksville Montgomery County emergency schedule. Extended care will be provided on the inclement weather closure days, contingent on road conditions. All weather related closings/delays/dismissals will be communicated through email and posted to the Little Scholars social media outlets. In the event of a natural disaster resulting in phone lines being down, directions will be sent via email/text and placed on the front door of the school.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival and dismissal times are outlined with a 15 minute window in the *Daily schedule* section above, unless enrolled in the after school extended care program. Before school care students may arrive no earlier than 6:45 am. Students enrolled in the after school extended care program must be picked-up by an authorized person no later than 5:30pm. If pick-up occurs after 5:30pm for students enrolled in After School Care, a late pick up fee of \$1.00 per minute will be billed to the parents/guardian's account.

Little Scholars teachers and staff are unavailable during arrival and dismissal for any parent requests. Safety is of the utmost importance therefore, the full attention of the staff is required to maintain quality supervision. All classrooms are closed prior to and concluding academic hours, with the exception of prior arrangements. Parents or students should not enter any closed classrooms, unless prior approval has been granted.

Authorized Person Release

Staff will release students to only those listed as an authorized person on the documented student emergency contact form with proper photo identification provided. Staff will not release students to anyone that cannot provide an appropriate car seat or booster seat. Additionally, Little Scholars Montessori staff will NOT release any child to a person suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Carloop Procedure

Little Scholars will utilize a carloop style arrival and dismissal procedure. Vehicles will enter the parking lot of Little Scholars and follow the car line through the covered portico. A Little Scholars

staff member will assist each student with entering/exiting the vehicle and will escort students into the building when necessary. Students may not exit the vehicle before a teacher approaches to ensure safety procedures are followed and the student has all of their belongings necessary for the school day.

Parking Lot Safety

- Drivers should not be on the phone while navigating the carloop.
- Vehicles should be in park prior to the staff member approaching the vehicle.
- Adults are asked to remain in vehicles during carloop. The Little Scholars staff have been trained on proper car seat safety and will ensure the students are safely seated.
- Please note that Little Scholars Montessori is a smoke-free facility therefore, smoking while on the premises including within personal vehicles during arrival or dismissal is against school policy.

Parents of Extended Care students will need to park their vehicle and escort their student(s) in and out of the building during arrival and dismissal. Supervision is the responsibility of the parent when arriving or departing during extended care hours. Children are to remain within 3 feet of parent/guardians at all times during this transition.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance Records

Students arriving by 8:30 am and dismissing between 2:45 pm - 3:00 pm will be checked in and out through the Lifecubby application by a Little Scholars staff member. Parents/guardians will be responsible for documenting arrival/departure times using the lifecubby application kiosk, located in the Little Scholars foyer, when these times are outside of the indicated times for the student enrollment schedule.

Tardy Arrival Policy

It is imperative that students arrive to Little Scholars Montessori on time. Students arriving after 8:30 am, will need to be checked-in using the lifecubby application kiosk and escorted to their assigned classroom by the parent/guardian. Additionally, parent/guardians must ensure the student completes their morning responsibilities at a developmentally appropriate independence level. A list of morning responsibilities will be provided by each classroom teacher and may list tasks such as storing personal items properly, lunch and snack preparation, changing of shoes, etc. It is important that students recognize consistent expectations, regardless of arrival time to ensure development of intrinsic initiative.

Medical appointments, including dental and therapeutic, should be scheduled so that the student arrives at school no later than 8:45 am or is dismissed no earlier than 12:00 pm, as to not interrupt the Montessori block. When an after lunch arrival is unavoidable, the student is required to have been provided lunch before attending Little Scholars for the day. The lunch schedule is documented in the *Daily Schedule* section of the Little Scholars Student Handbook.

Students arriving after 8:45 am, without a doctor's note, will receive a tardy notification. Upon the 3rd tardy notification, a late arrival fee of \$15.00 will be assessed for each late arrival without a medical excuse. Excessive tardiness for all students will not be tolerated and such students will not be permitted to remain enrolled in the Little Scholars program.

Early / Late Dismissal

Dismissal time begins at 2:45pm. All students, not enrolled in After School Care must be picked up by an authorized person no later than 3:00pm. If a student is present at 3:01pm, the daily extended care rate of \$15.00 will be assessed. Upon dismissal, the parent/guardian will be required to check-out the student through the lifecubby application kiosk to ensure accuracy of report times.

If an early or late dismissal is necessary, a written request should be sent to the teacher no later than the morning of the requested dismissal change. This will allow staff to ensure the student is dismissal ready at the requested time so that the dismissal will not cause disruption to the learning environment of the classroom.

Lower School (Nursery – Pre-K)

Little Scholars Montessori is required to report any communicable diseases, and therefore should be informed about the nature of a student's absence by 9am through the school email littlescholars.tn@gmail.com.

Upper School (Kindergarten-Fifth Grade)

In addition to the above tardy and dismissal policies being applicable, it is imperative elementary students attend the full school period. Students arriving after 11:45 am or dismissed before 12:00 pm are not counted present for the full school day. Little Scholars Montessori is required by Tennessee state law to report excessive tardiness and early dismissals for elementary students (Kindergarten–Grade 5). Students who have 5 unexcused tardies (arriving anytime after 8:45 am) are considered to have missed one full school day of instruction. For students Kindergarten through Grade 5, parents will need to meet with the Lead Teacher to discuss an academic plan for missed instruction after such an occurrence.

The Compulsory School Attendance Law in Tennessee (TCA 49-6-3007) states that a student who has been absent five (5) days (this means an aggregate of five days during the school year and not necessarily five consecutive days) without adequate excuse is considered TRUANT. Little Scholars is required to follow the state of TN Attendance Law requirements for reporting truancy.

The following are “official/adequate excuses” that should be turned into the LSM office within 1 week of the absence date:

- Parent note (up to 5 days excused for student illness);
- Medical note (doctor, dentist, hospital, therapist) for which the student was the patient
- Court note for which the student was required to be in court
- Funeral notice (obituary/funeral program of a family member)
- Military deployment for military dependents (official documentation required), TN Law (TCA 49-6-3019) allows the following for out of country deployments 12 months or longer:
 - 1 excused absence when the parent leaves for deployment
 - 1 excused absence when the parent returns at the end of deployment
 - Up to 10 days excused absences when the parent is home from the deployment for Rest and Recuperation
 - Policy additionally allows up to 5 consecutive days of excused absences when the parent deployment is less than 12 months.

*Absences exceeding the limitations of the Little Scholars Attendance Policy may be granted approval by the Little Scholars Montessori Director. Approval will be individually based on the circumstances for request, prior attendance, and academic performance. Requests must be submitted no later than 2 weeks prior to the intended absence date.

HEALTH POLICY

Immunization

The state of Tennessee requires, in part: The attendance of every child at every public and private school, shall be conditional upon presentation of each child's first day of attendance at school with proof of either (1) full immunization, (2) the initiation and compliance with the schedule of immunization as required by law, or (3) exemption signed and guaranteed by a qualified physician. These records must be on a Tennessee state form. Pediatricians will have the TN immunization form available upon request.

Illness Prevention Measures

Little Scholars Montessori is a shared learning environment with hands-on materials, making the spread of illness easy. Proactive prevention is key to minimizing the spread of such illness. Contagious diseases are a rare occurrence; however, they do happen. Should parents suspect potential illness, students should not attend Little Scholars until all symptoms have subsided to proactively protect the student body and the LS staff. Little Scholars Montessori will send email notification if there may have been exposure to a communicable disease. Aligning with the Standard for School-Administered Child Care Programs Health and Safety, Little Scholars practices the following policies and procedures:

- Staff will perform daily intake measures. All students shall be checked upon arrival and observed for signs of communicable disease during the day.

Parents of a student presenting symptoms of illness will be contacted immediately by the Little Scholars staff. The Parent Portal will need to be updated with current phone numbers for home, work, cell, and at least one local emergency contact to ensure the student can be dismissed within one hour of initial contact attempted by Little Scholars Montessori. Children are not permitted to return to Little Scholars for 24 hours after his/her symptoms have subsided without the need of medicinal intervention. An illness notification for Little Scholars records stating the nature of illness and dismissal time of the child must be signed by the authorized person at student pick-up. Little Scholars will follow the state mandated policies on illness and take fever and contagious disease very seriously.

** If a child is sent home or staying home due to an illness, **the sibling(s)** MUST also stay home to limit additional exposure potential.*

Symptom Presentation

Children with any of the following symptoms are not permitted to remain at school and will need to be picked up within one hour of contact by Little Scholars staff:

- Fever of 101° F (~38° Celsius) or higher.
 - During FLU season the fever policy will be adjusted to 100° accompanied with any other flu symptoms.
 - Students with a confirmed flu diagnosis may not return to Little Scholars until the student remains fever free for 24 hours without the need of medicinal intervention.
- Vomiting - two or more occasions within 24 hours.
- Diarrhea - three or more watery stools within 24 hours or 1 occurrence of bloody stool.
- Rash, especially with fever or itching.

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- Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pinkeye) until clear or after 24 hours of receiving antibiotic treatment.
 - Sick appearance, not feeling well, and/or not able to keep up with program activities (at Director's discretion.)
 - Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered and after 24 hours of receiving antibiotic treatment, if antibiotic treatment is necessary.

Specified Communicable Disease Policy

Lice or scabies - Proof of treatment must be provided for cases of head lice and scabies. Students will not be permitted attendance until all live lice bugs and nits (eggs) have been removed.

Impetigo and diagnosed strep must be treated *appropriately* for twenty-four (24) hours prior to readmission of the child to the center.

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie virus) blisters will need to be scabbed over and dry, usually 3 to 4 days after diagnosis before attendance will be permitted. Blisters will present on hands, feet, and mouth, but are not limited to other parts of the body.

DRESS CODE

Little Scholars Montessori is dedicated to providing a nurturing environment where children are recognized and supported as individuals and encouraged to grow through enriching and engaging experiences. One way we encourage this is by allowing students to choose how to dress for school each day, using guidance from parents to help make appropriate choices for weather and sensible play. It is the responsibility of Little Scholars to provide an educational atmosphere conducive to learning. Please help your child to learn the dress codes so that he/she can make appropriate choices when dressing for school. *Little Scholars administration may alter this dress code policy at any time throughout the school year.

General

1. Distracting outfit accessories are prohibited.
 - a. Hats, caps, hoods, and distracting headwear/headbands are prohibited inside buildings during school hours. These items can be worn when playing or working outside.
 - b. Sunglasses are prohibited inside buildings unless prescribed.

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- c. Jewelry can present a possible danger/hazard/distraction and can be lost or broken. It is not recommended to wear jewelry at school.
 2. Pajamas are not permitted.
 3. No aggressive and/or violent images, vulgarity, profanity or clothing that advertises drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.

Tops

1. Bare midriffs, see-through garments, undergarment type shirts, bare backs, halter tops, and spaghetti straps are prohibited.
2. Sleeveless shirts must be three fingers in width and no “muscle” shirts with long cutouts in the arm are allowed.
3. Low cut or off the shoulder shirts, blouses, or dresses are not permitted.

Bottoms

1. No spandex or brief type shorts are permitted, including running shorts or running/yoga tights.
2. Leggings are permissible as long as they are not see-through and the shirt reaches the top of thighs.
3. Skirts, dresses, and shorts may be worn in warm weather, provided they are mid-thigh in length.
4. Skirts and dresses must be worn with shorts underneath.
5. Children who are not totally toilet reliable should wear clothing that is extremely simple for them to get on or off. Loose fitting, elastic waist bottoms, or dresses are best for children who are still having ‘accidents.’
 - a. Pants with buttons or clasps are not acceptable for toilet training students.

Shoes

Standard footwear including shoes, boots, athletic shoes, and sandals must be worn.

1. Skate and light up shoes will not be allowed.
2. Students that have not mastered lace tying are not permitted to wear shoes that require tying.
3. Sandals must include a strap on the back of the foot to keep the foot contained. No flip-flops or slide on shoes allowed.

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4. Inside shoes must have rubber soles: Crocs, Toms, slide on shoes (similar to Vans style) or similar generic brands of these styles.

**When students are attending a school-sponsored event, student conduct and attire should follow the same guidelines documented in the LSM student handbook.*

Dress Code Violations

Students will be required to change into clothing that adheres to the LSM Dress Code when a violation occurs. If alternative, appropriate clothing is not on site, the student's parents will be contacted. If appropriate clothing is not provided within one hour the student will be sent home. Recurring dress code violations may result in dismissal from the Little Scholars program.

FOOD POLICY

Lunch and Snacks

Lunch and snacks, including extended care snacks, will be provided daily by the parent. To accommodate a better variety of lunch options, Little Scholars will heat a lunch when necessary. Meals requiring heating may not require more than 1 minute of heating. Additionally, heated food must be provided in a microwave safe container, separate from any other non-heated food items. Plastic bags are not considered adequate microwave safe containers.

Students will be allowed to pick a morning snack item from their lunch to be taken into the classroom each day. Parents should account for a food item being eaten during morning snack to ensure the amount of food provided is adequate. Food and drink items should all be healthy in nature.

Nut allergies can be life threatening. Allergy free students should be educated on the concept of allergies and what being allergic means. Prior to providing nuts or peanut products as a food item for school, parents should discuss not sharing food items with their students as well as keeping those food items away from children who are allergic.

Health Department regulations require that all food for snacks, birthdays or any other occasion where food is brought from home be commercially prepared.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

An important component of Little Scholars' foundation is the expectation of stakeholders to participate in their student's success. Little Scholars believes the school's purpose is complete only when educators and parents collectively implement the shared values in and outside of the

classroom. To support the collaborative culture, Little Scholars teachers will provide parents with an outlined Parent Curriculum, daily LifeCubby observations, accommodate parent meetings as necessary, and welcome any parent provided curriculum resources.

Communication Policy

The Little Scholars staff will help to foster a sense of community by creating deep relationships with students and parents. Communication is an essential component to the overall efficiency of the school, and will be provided consistently. Preferred method of correspondence with Little Scholars administration is through the school email, littlescholars.tn@gmail.com. Additionally, parents may contact Little Scholars administration by calling or texting 931.326.4576 during the office hours of 9:00am. - 2:00pm, Monday through Friday.

Lifecubby messaging will be the first method of communication between teachers and parents. Parents will need to communicate individualized discussion topics using a direct message in the Lifecubby system to avoid posting confidential matters in class wide message communication. Following communication via Lifecubby, the second form of communication is the teacher's LSM email provided by the teacher/school. Responses will occur within 1 business day of the email date. Staff cell phone numbers (personal) will be provided to parents, but may ONLY be used in emergency situations. Emergency calls to students and teachers are limited to school hours, 7:00 am - 4:00 pm.

Discussions regarding student progress and classroom experience are welcomed. Daily progress reporting, including academic and general welfare, will be provided using the lifecubby application. Conferences may be requested through the classroom teacher and scheduled outside of classroom hours. Unannounced parent meeting requests will not be accommodated, as the staff are required to maintain supervision of their assigned classroom. All student files, curriculum notes, student data etc. are property of Little Scholars Montessori and may not be used or transferred without the specific written permission of the Director and the student's parents. Two parent conferences will be conducted each school year with exact dates listed on the LS parent calendar.

Classroom Observations

Parent observations of the classroom environment are welcome. Appointments are required for all classroom observations. Appointments can be requested through the Lead Teacher of the class a parent may wish to observe. Classroom observations will not be limited by time or quantity when meeting the appointment request requirement.

Parents observing a classroom in which their child is enrolled, may or may not observe a normal day of activity for their student. It is difficult for some children to manage their emotional

attachment to parents and sustain their independence in the classroom simultaneously. Classroom observations may be disruptive to the overall learning environment as well. Parents will need to review, sign, and adhere to the Little Scholars Classroom Observation Policy to ensure disruptions to the learning environment are minimized.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held to provide parents with direct discussion of their children's social, emotional and academic growth in the school environment. Conference dates are listed on the LSM parent calendar and typically last 15-20 minutes in length. If a concern arises between regularly scheduled conferences, requests for a conference will be accommodated outside of school hours. Requests can be made through the Lead teacher of the classroom.

Discussion points of parent teacher conferences should not be communicated to the student. Teachers need the freedom to discuss the child's activities and progression openly with parents. Lessons are presented at the developmentally appropriate time for each student. Time and discipline are intellectual abstractions the child is not yet able to process out of context. Student discussions of conferences should be limited to affirming statements such as "I really enjoyed visiting with your teacher" or "Your teacher enjoys working with you."

LOWER SCHOOL POLICIES (Nursery – Pre-K)

Nursery

Little Scholars Montessori will adhere to all standards for school administered child care programs instituted by the TN State Board of Education. These rules include, but not limited to, immunization requirements, safe sleep practices, supervision, health and safety, and feeding policies. Detailed information is provided on the Little Scholars Nursery Policy Form provided to all families enrolled in the Little Scholars nursery program.

Toileting Training

Independence with toileting is a primary indicator of readiness for this kind of school setting. Children must be toilet trained before promoting to a preschool classroom. Children who are toilet trained:

- Require little to no prompting for bathroom needs.
- Handle most aspects of toileting with minimal assistance, including wiping.

Preschool-school age classrooms are not equipped with diapering facilities and therefore, cannot accommodate students not toilet trained.

Little Scholars will assist verbally with changing clothes when necessary. Student attire should be such that it can be removed and put on independently. An extra set of labeled clothes and shoes are required to be provided and stored at Little Scholars in a Ziploc bag, labeled with the student's name. A new set of clothes and shoes will need to be provided when seasons change, and if the current set is used by the student for any reason. Little Scholars staff can usually assist children in the case of a minor toileting accident. For licensing and sanitation reasons, parents are called for major toileting accidents.

If a child is not toilet trained or otherwise ready to attend at a scheduled start date, financial matters are as follows: Registration and curriculum fee are always non-refundable. Fees are forfeited, if the student is completely withdrawn from the Little Scholars program or monthly tuition fees can be paid to hold the student's enrollment until the child is ready for attendance. Alternatively, students can withdraw temporarily, return to the in-house waiting list, and return when the student is developmentally ready to accept the next available opening. Fees will be held in this option and the payments will be transferred to the next start date within the current school year. Paid fees do not carry over to following school years.

Personal Items

Toys, sippy cups (nursery may provide sippy cups), or lovies will not be permitted at Little Scholars Montessori. Toys brought to school will be stored by the student's teacher until dismissal. Toys at school detract from the meticulously prepared learning environment. The classroom materials are community property and every child knows the procedure for taking a turn with them. Young children have not yet developed the social skill of sharing personal belongings and therefore, personal toys hinder the foundation of classroom expectations.

The Montessori materials are carefully selected and prepared to suit many purposes. Within the classroom children are surrounded by a marvelous array of materials, experiences, sights and sounds, objects to manipulate in a variety of ways, exercises which will challenge, soothe, inspire, and inform. The richness of the classroom cannot be duplicated at home nor can the home environment be duplicated at school. They are two related, but distinct environments.

UPPER SCHOOL POLICIES (Kindergarten-Fifth Grade)

Kindergarten Eligibility

To be eligible for Kindergarten, a student must be five (5) years of age on or before August 15 (TCA 49-6-201 (b) (3)). School officials determine grade level placement and classroom assignment. Admission may be granted without condition, or on academic or behavioral probation.

Homework Policy

Homework is important because:

1. It reinforces concepts and skills learned in class.
2. It prepares students for upcoming lesson topics
3. It aids in evaluating student progress.
4. It helps students develop organizational and time-management skills.
5. It helps students assume responsibility for their own work.

Types of Homework

Homework may include learning activities such as practice of skills already learned in class, recreational or content reading for upcoming lesson topics, spelling word practice, repetition of math facts memorization, or special projects of three (3) days to six (6) weeks, etc.

Guidelines for Completing Homework

Students are expected to assume responsibility for completing and submitting all homework on their own, to the best of their ability, and on-time. Students are also expected to assume responsibility for making up homework assignments missed due to absence.

Missed Assignment Policy

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and submit all missed assignments within the given time limits. Students will have a maximum of one (1) day for each excused absence day to turn in make-up work. Suspended students are responsible for turning in all assigned work upon returning to school/class. Failure to do so may result in a zero or no credit being given for the assignments. Students are also responsible for all materials covered during class while absent.

Grading and Reporting Procedures

Little Scholars Montessori has developed an accountability system to display each student's personal progression in both work habits and academics specific to reading, mathematics, and language arts. The Accountability Reports will be used in determining student goals and grade level advancement for grades K-5th at Little Scholars Montessori. These reports will be sent home every nine weeks to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school the following business day. Students will receive the Accountability Reports on 10/22/18, 12/17/18, 3/12/19, and 5/14/19 (tentatively).

Academic Plans

Students not meeting academic standards, will be provided a personalized academic plan to ensure adequate academic progression for each student. Little Scholars Academic Plans were established as a support measure for proactive intervention. Academic plans will outline teacher expectations, parent expectations, defined student driven goals, and goal attainment deadlines. Additionally, academic plans will list subsequent measures that would need to be acquired should the outlined goals not be met by deadline including, but not limited to, outside intervention, academic probation, and potential disenrollment from the Little Scholars program.

Academic Modification Plans are constructed for students with unique learning needs. Modification Plans do not serve as a formalized, legal document such as a 504 or IEP therefore, will not be recognized as such by any other educational institution.

Promotion and Retention

Classrooms are comprised of a range of grade levels within the student base. Although students may remain in a classroom for multiple years with this classroom structure, students will promote annually to the next grade level. Retentions may be made when, in the judgement of the teacher and/or principal such retentions are in the best educational interest of the student as follows:

Students may be retained if the academic progress does not warrant promotion to the next grade.

Grade 3 only: Retentions will be determined by Section 1 of [TCA 49-6-3115](#) which prohibits the promotion of any third grade student to the next grade level unless the student shows a basic understanding of the subject of reading as demonstrated by the student's grades or standardized test scores. Permits promotion if the student receives a research-based intervention prior to the start of the school year.

Cumulative Records

The official cumulative record of a student's progress and attendance is maintained by Little Scholars Montessori. Upon a student transfer, official transcripts must be sent directly to the school or agency making the record request. Parents may, however, view and/or obtain unofficial copies of the contents of their child's cumulative record.

In accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-302 (a) (14) 2017, Little Scholars Montessori is within its right to withhold all grade cards, diplomas, certificates of progress or transcripts of a student

who has incurred a debt to the school until restitution for the debt is paid in full to Little Scholars Montessori. Please note that student medical records will not be withheld pursuant to this policy.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

In general, the Little Scholars environment and structure eliminates the need for adult-imposed discipline. Children are taught to make appropriate choices, and helped in developing intrinsic discipline. The foundation of Little Scholars centers around three basic boundaries: respect yourself, respect others, and respect all creatures and things around you. Little Scholars enforces 3 main ground rules for all students. A child may not mistreat another child, mistreat school materials, or engage in behavior that could result in injury to himself or another child. If a child breaks one of these rules, appropriate actions and choices will be discussed with the student along with being taught tools to manage similar situations in the future. This is the Little Scholars approach to proactively managing behavior to minimize chances of future expulsion. Discussions will be initiated quietly to the child in a respectful fashion. If necessary, the teacher will ask the child to either choose self-control or to observe the other children until the student is ready to make proper choices and rejoin the group.

Disruptive Behavior

If at any time a child's behavior threatens or endangers the safety of others, at the school's discretion a child may be sent home for the day. The school and parents will work together on a case-by-case basis to resolve the issue as soon as possible. The school must be able, under the constraints of normal supervision, to provide a safe, non-threatening environment for all children. At the school's discretion, a child may be asked not to return until the school determines the student can reintegrate safely and without disruption. For example, biting is a significant health threat and is usually considered serious aggression, requiring the child to be sent home for the remainder of the day. The strict code of conduct applies, but not limited to, hitting, kicking, scratching, fighting, hair pulling, harassment, and bullying.

Biting Policy

Little Scholars understands that biting, unfortunately, is a common developmental occurrence for toddlers (12 months-30 months). However, it is the obligation of the Little Scholars staff to keep students safe and teach a child that bites different, more appropriate behavior. Therefore, the following procedures have been instituted for the safety of all students.

Student Directed Resolution Steps:

1. The teacher will communicate that biting is not acceptable.

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2. Staff will instruct and help the student develop tools for appropriate behaviors and reactions.
 3. A Behavior Report will document the incident in the LifeCubby application.

Recurring biting:

1. Student Directed Resolution Steps will be implemented.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff, and possibly administrative staff, to determine the antecedent to the occurrence of the child biting.
3. Upon the second occurrence of biting, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
4. If a third incident of biting occurs, the student will be suspended for 2 business days.
5. Upon the fifth occurrence of biting the student will be removed from the Little Scholars program permanently.

*If a child bites twice in a 4 hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from child care for the remainder of the day. This will not count towards the 2 day suspension.

Student Discipline

Discipline will be individualized and consistent for each child. It shall be appropriate to each child's level of understanding and be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. Behavior forms will be available to report any unacceptable behaviors to parents. While documented communication is for the betterment of the student by creating a collective support system, behavior reports are also for the protection of staff and Little Scholars should any liability issues arise.

Disciplinary Action

When excessive disruptive behavior occurs at Little Scholars Montessori, a behavior report will be provided for each occurrence and the following disciplinary procedures will be enforced:

1. The first occurrence will result in a conversation with the child and/or parent to discuss expected behavior and a behavior report will be provided to the parents.
2. The second incident of disruptive behavior will result in Little Scholars requesting a parent conference to go over expected behavior and/or required to pick up the child.
3. The third time the child engages in the behavior, the student's parents are called and the child is required to leave school for the day.

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4. At the fourth disruptive event, the student will be expelled from Little Scholars.

Expulsion

If a student instigates what is considered dangerous behavior, for the safety of all staff and students, the discipline process will be expedited directly to step IV of the Student Disciplinary Action procedures. Students required to leave Little Scholars due to behavioral reprimand will be required to be picked up by an authorized person within 1 hour of Little Scholars initial attempt of contact.

The school may dismiss or refuse readmission to any student whose attitude or general deportment is detrimental to the best interest of the student or school, regardless of the type or number of offenses acquired.

If an elementary-aged student displays what is deemed as aggressive or violent behavior by the teacher or director, he/she is subject to suspension from school. The length of suspension will be determined by the director in accordance with the action(s) taken by the student.

Additionally, a student will not be suspended or expelled from Little Scholars due to complaints of alleged violations, reporting abuse or neglect against the program, or questioning the program regarding the state rules and regulations.

Zero Tolerance (Immediate Expulsion)

Notwithstanding the foregoing or any other law to the contrary, a pupil determined to have brought to school or to be in unauthorized, knowing and intentional possession on school property of a "firearm", as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year, except that the director or superintendent may modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the other provisions of this part, a student committing battery upon any teacher, principal, administrator, any other employee of a local education agency, or unlawfully possessing any drug including any "controlled substance" as defined in §§ 39-17-403 through 39-17-415, or "legend drug" as defined by § 53-10-101, shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year, except that the director or superintendent may modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require or prohibit the assignment of such students to an alternative school. NOTE: Zero Tolerance students are not allowed to participate in any school activities.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Parental permission is required for students to access technology and digital resources at school. Little Scholars Montessori uses a variety of technology and digital resources to enable and enhance instruction. With permission, students may use physical devices, including but not limited to, computers, tablets, cameras, and television (all of which allow some degree of Internet access). Students may also access web-based applications to create, review, and store their work on the Internet. Examples of these tools include, but are not limited to Google Apps for Education (not Gmail), Reading A-Z, Science A-Z, Brainpop Jr., Spelling City, Math Aids, and online sites for research. In addition, students' information and student work may be maintained by and stored on web-based instructional sites and applications. Not all tools are used at all grade levels.

Little Scholars Montessori has several processes in place to protect students while using technology and digital resources. Students are educated about appropriate online behavior, and awareness on how to properly use the devices. Internet filters are installed on devices to remove most harmful content. Students' internet activity will be monitored when using any device.

Students are expected to use technology and digital resources under a teacher's direction for educational purposes only. In order to protect all students and classroom technology, students are required to adhere to the following Little Scholars Technology Agreement.

1. Students must wash their hands prior to using any classroom technology.
2. Food/drinks should not be near classroom technology at any time.
3. Mobile technology devices, such as iPads, should remain on a desk or table at all times.
4. Students should not carry these devices around without permission.
5. All classroom technology should be treated with RESPECT. Students should use them gently and for educational purposes only.
6. Students must NOT change the "settings" on any device, unless specifically requested by a Little Scholars staff member.
7. Students must respect the files of others by refraining from using, altering, reading, or deleting another student's file(s). If a file is left open on any device, the students should alert the teacher or creator of the file, or save and close the file.
8. Students must ONLY use apps or websites permissible by LSM staff.
9. Students are NOT allowed to check personal email or browse the internet freely for personal entertainment purposes.

10. The use of the camera or video on any device must only be utilized for educational purposes, such as recording learning results.

11. All technology should be properly turned off and put away safely prior to class dismissal.

The choice of a student to violate these requirements will result in technology privileges being revoked for the remainder of the academic year. If a device is rendered non-functional due to negligent treatment by a student, the parent will be responsible for the replacement cost of the Little Scholars device.

CELEBRATION EVENTS

Little Scholars believes that celebrations and birthday events are a special day to share with friends. Celebrations should adhere to the following guidelines:

- All celebration event schedules must first be discussed and approved with the Lead Teacher prior to the celebration date.
- Healthy, near sugar free food and beverages are welcome during celebrations. All food must be commercially prepared in order to meet Health Department requirements. For example: fruit trays with or without yogurt, meat, or cheese trays.
- On occasion parent contact information may be shared with a classmate for the purpose of scheduling playdates and parties. Little Scholars will request permission before sharing any personal information.
- Event invitations must be provided to all classmates, or gender specific, in order to be handed out at Little Scholars Montessori.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

Field Trip Fee

ALL students (nursery exempt) must pay the field trip fee of \$50, regardless of intent to attend field trips. This fee includes the student cost of field trips, a student field trip shirt, and child care at LSM for a limited number of students that cannot attend the scheduled field trip.

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for adult and sibling admission cost upon arrival at the location or as otherwise communicated via event instructions.

Attendance

Students attending the field trip must submit the digital field trip attendance form by the requested deadline. Access to this form will be provided with specific event details by the Little Scholars staff via email and Little Scholars social media platforms no less than 2 weeks prior to an event. Submissions received after the deadline will not be accepted.

****Part time students are welcome to attend field trips regardless of the event day scheduled.**

Child Care

Child care at LSM will be provided for a limited number of students that cannot attend the scheduled field trip. Child care will be provided on a first come, first serve basis. Registration for child care on field trip dates can be submitted through the Little Scholars website 2 weeks prior to an event. Once child care capacity has been reached registration will be closed. Students who have not submitted a confirmed registration for child care will not be permitted attendance at Little Scholars on the event date.

Supervision

All Little Scholars field trips are parent sponsored. Little Scholars is not responsible for supervising any children and will not be held liable under any circumstances. Chaperones are responsible for all children they have transported to the event venue. This responsibility includes, but not limited to, the children being in chaperone's presence at all times, bathroom needs, meals, and any other personal needs.

Transportation

Little Scholars will not provide transportation to/from any field trip event. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to transport their student or find alternative transportation.

Attire

Little Scholars student field trip shirt must be worn with season/occasion appropriate and restroom friendly attire. Tennis shoes are required.

Student Conduct

Student conduct should follow the same guidelines documented in the LSM student handbook. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. The first occurrence of disruptive

behavior will result in a conversation with the child and parent to discuss expectation of student behavior. Following occurrences may result in the student being asked to leave without refund and possible revocation of future field trip privileges will be reviewed by the Director.

LITTLE SCHOLARS' EMERGENCY PLAN

Each month, Little Scholars conducts Fire Drills, Intruder Drills, and Tornado Drills. Student and staff safety preparedness is a primary concern of Little Scholars. Should there be any question concerning emergency practices, the Little Scholars Director maintains a copy of all Emergency Policies and Emergency Drill records which are available for parent viewing at anytime. These policies and procedures are located on the Little Scholars website for parent convenience.

Accidents and Medical Emergencies

If a child is injured at school, the parents will be contacted immediately following the medical need being addressed. If the student's parents are unable to be contacted, the authorized persons listed on the Emergency Card will be contacted. It is the responsibility of the parent to maintain the portal and emergency contact form with current and accurate emergency information. Little Scholars should be notified of any changes to the Emergency Contact Form, especially changes in address, home, work or cell phone numbers, etc.

A digital incident report will be completed by the witnessing teacher and documented in the lifecubby communication system for parent records.

All Little Scholar's staff have been trained in procedures for emergency management. In the event of a life threatening situation, staff will follow emergency procedures including, but not limited to, administering first aid, CPR, and contacting emergency professionals. Parents will be notified immediately following the student receiving emergency care. Documentation of the incident will be provided in the lifecubby system for parent records.

Power Outages

Little Scholars School will be required to close if electricity is out for more than 1 1/2 hours. All parents will be contacted by the Little Scholars staff, and required to retrieve students within 1 hour. Emergency contacts will be contacted if the parent is unable to be contacted.

STATE REGULATIONS

Little Scholars will abide by the following state regulations:

School staff is required to report any suspected child abuse, neglect or exploitation to Child Protective Services (CPS) or our local law enforcement agency immediately. When any licensed or certified child care provider or their employees has reasonable cause to believe a child has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she is required to report such incident, or cause a report to be made to the proper law enforcement agency. Little Scholars School is not required to inform the parents of this reporting.

In addition to the Little Scholars' Behavior Management and Discipline policy outlined above, Little Scholars will not use any form of corporal punishment which includes: biting, jerking, shaking, spanking, slapping, hitting, kicking, or any other means of inflicting physical pain. Any form of corporal punishment is not permitted on the premises of Little Scholars by anyone, including parents.