



**South Metro**  
**Montessori School**

# **Parent Handbook**

**Updated 2/2022**

## SMMS Program Plan

South Metro Montessori School, LLC (SMMS) is a full day Montessori preschool, operating from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm (6:30 am with special permission only), Monday through Friday. SMMS is open year-round excluding major holidays and predetermined staff in-service days.

During Covid-19 times, our operating hours are from 7-5:30 unless a need is stated by families. These limited hours allow us to staff appropriately to keep the mixing of staff and groups of children at a minimum

A calendar listing school closings will be distributed upon enrollment and updated each spring prior to the next school year.

SMMS provides a full-day program for the following groups of children:

- Toddlers: 16 months to 33 months
- Preschool: 33 months to 7 years

While children are in our care we guarantee that they will be under direct supervision at all times. A 1/10 teacher/child ratio is maintained throughout the day for preschoolers and a 1/7 ratio for toddlers. SMMS is licensed for:

- 7 Toddlers (no more than five @ 2.5 years and younger)
- 30 Preschool/School-Agers (No more than five total school-agers)

Tuition for toddlers changes to the preschool rate the first full week after the toddler turns the appropriate age for preschool (33 months).

Children will move to the Butterfly Room full time when space allows.

SMMS is a non-denominational preschool offering education to all children regardless of race, creed, color, or sex. Children with special needs may be admitted to the program if the handicap can be accommodated within the present program structure. In all cases the children must be able to

participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to themselves and other children.

Before starting at SMMS, parents must establish set days and hours of care that is needed for their child during the week. This allows SMMS to schedule appropriate coverage when needed. If the hours of care need to change, parents must first inform and obtain approval from SMMS before they occur. Again, this is to allow for appropriate coverage during the day. In the best interest of the child, we strongly discourage any child's schedule to exceed 10 hours per day.

The SMMS Program Plan is evaluated in writing by the school Director each year to ensure that our program remains current with the developmental needs of the children.

The Program Plan is included in this Parent Handbook, which is available on the SMMS website, or parents can request a paper copy at any time. Upon a child's enrollment, parents are asked to read the handbook and sign the acknowledgment page at the end indicating they understand the school policy and procedures. Parents can ask for additional copies of the Program Plan at any time.

### **Curriculum Goals and Philosophy**

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that the goal of early childhood education should be to cultivate in each child the natural desire to learn. SMMS has adopted this goal and with its Montessori curriculum and teaching methods, offers an environment that stimulates and supports each child's individual development.

*“Bring the child to the consciousness of his own dignity, and he will be free. We see no limit to what should be offered to the child, for his will be an immense field of chosen activity.”*

- Maria Montessori

SMMS is also inspired by the philosophy of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The founder of these schools, Loris Malaguzzi based his educational philosophy on his research from Maria Montessori as well as many other educators in history. The Reggio Emilia Approach sees children as strong and capable individuals that have a right to a quality education. We plan a curriculum that supports our own context in Lakeville, Minnesota that gives value to time, complex materials, individuality in children as well as the community.

***No Way  
The Hundred  
Is there***

*The child  
Is made of one hundred  
The child has  
A hundred languages  
A hundred hands  
A hundred thoughts  
A hundred ways of thinking  
Of playing, of speaking.  
A hundred always a hundred  
Ways of listening  
Of marveling of loving  
A hundred joys  
For singing and understanding  
A hundred worlds  
To discover  
A hundred worlds  
To invent  
A hundred worlds  
To dream  
The child has  
A hundred languages  
(and a hundred, hundred, hundred more)  
But they steal ninety-nine.  
The school and the culture  
Separate the head form the body  
They tell the child  
To think without hands  
To do without head  
To listen and not to speak  
To understand without joy  
To love and to marvel  
Only at Easter and Christmas.  
They tell the child:  
To discover the world already there  
And of the hundred  
They steal ninety-nine  
They tell the child  
That work and play*

*Reality and fantasy  
Science and imagination  
Sky and earth  
Reason and dream  
Are things  
That do not belong together.*

*And thus they tell the child  
That the hundred is not there.  
The child says:  
No. The hundred is there.*

-Loris Malaguzzi

## **The basic principals from both philosophies followed at SMMS:**

A pleasant leaning environment is prepared with beautiful, varied, and complex materials for children to have access to every day. Montessori materials, which assist the child's motor coordination, sensory and intellectual development are readily available, along with a variety of materials for creative expression.

Certified Montessori teachers serve as guides and helpers for children as they explore and master the environment. Teachers are seen as co-learners and observe and document children in their experiences throughout the day. This documentation is made visible and gives life to the environment of SMMS. Teachers foster and model a joy in learning.

Dr. Montessori aimed to nurture all aspects of students: the intellectual, the emotional, and the social. The content of SMMS program therefore consists of diverse activities: drawing, reading, writing, dancing, building, counting, sorting, problem-solving, cooking, talking, sharing, and listening. It is our belief that SMMS can help children develop self-confidence and fundamental learning skills. Above all, SMMS offers an enjoyable, safe and exciting place for children to spend their day.

The staff is dedicated to these goals and continuously seeks out opportunities for professional development. They complete related training and education on a continual basis throughout their involvement with the school. Each member of our professional staff has been carefully selected based on their specific qualifications, education, and genuine love and caring for children. Each staff person's credential's

meet or exceed the State's Department of Human Services licensing regulations.

The philosophy of SMMS is made up of aspects of both the Montessori and Reggio Emilio philosophies. Following both philosophies inspires both teachers and children in many varied and complex situations.

If parents are interested we offer many other resources for further research on either of these philosophies. Please ask any of the teachers for these.

At SMMS our goal is help families feel supported and nurtured. Staff and families work as a team to ensure that each child is supported in their growth towards reaching their fullest potential.

### Program

SMMS offers an educational program based on the philosophy of Maria Montessori and Loris Malaguzzi. The goals of the program are to support and encourage children in their development of creativity, initiative, independence, discipline, and self confidence.

Children attending SMMS are offered an aesthetically pleasing environment with many varied and complex materials which offer endless opportunities for learning. Children are free to move about the classroom, choosing their own learning activities and contributing their thoughts and ideas to learning experiences. Children may work independently or with others. Teachers prepare the environment and materials, through observations of what each child's needs are to aid in each child's growth. Teachers are co-learners with children and strive to support children's critical thinking skills.

SMMS has teachers that have participated and received certification from an accredited Montessori Teacher Training, have participated in Study Groups to the Preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy or have been trained by the other teachers at SMMS in both of these philosophies. Teachers at SMMS are actively engaged in continuing their learning processes and participate in many learning opportunities throughout the year.

## The Three Rules of Work

1. Out of clutter, find simplicity.
2. From discord, find harmony.
3. In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.

*-Attributed to Albert Einstein*

The following areas of exploration are included in our daily schedule:

**Practical Life:** Through Practical Life activities, children acquire many daily living skills. Children have the opportunities to care for their environment and themselves. These activities also help to foster independence, concentration, coordination, and order. These skills will enable children to thrive, and not just survive, in their lives. Practical Life activities are opportunities to practice and refine skills.

*The essence of independence is to be able to do something for one's self.*  
-Maria Montessori

**Language:** Through a variety of language activities and materials children become familiar with sounds and symbols and begin the process of writing that naturally leads to reading. The process of learning how to read should be as painless and simple as learning how to speak. At SMMS, children are of mixed age groups, the younger children learn from the older children. As with all Montessori materials, languages materials are experienced using all of the senses. Children are exposed to many learning opportunities throughout the day that will help them in their process to becoming readers.

**Mathematics:** Children are introduced to concrete materials that are designed to isolate a concept and prepare them for abstract thinking. These materials graphically represent what is taking place in a given mathematical process. They help children understand and develop a strong foundation in mathematics and geometry.

**Expressive Languages:** Children have access throughout the day to music, art, creative dramatics, and building materials. These materials give us insight into the children's thoughts and ideas about the world and community around them.

**Geography and Cultural Studies:** Children will be exposed to materials that teach them about the broader world. Geography curriculum starts with the cosmic; learning about planets and the solar system and from there narrows the focus to continents, countries, states, cities, etc. Maria Montessori believed that in order to teach children empathy that it was important that they learn about other cultures at an early age.

**Hands on Science:** Children will have many opportunities to study the natural world around them. They will have access to simple scientific tools to understand and appreciate how their actions can affect the planet they live on. Children will have a basic introduction into botany, zoology, and biology.

**Sensorial:** A child interacts with the physical world through their senses. The Sensorial materials are designed to help children focus their attention more carefully in exploring similarities and differences using all of their senses.

Our program is geared to the development of each child and provides a balance of activities:

- Structured and unstructured
- Informative and creative
- Active and quiet
- Indoor and outdoor
- Observing and participatory
- Individual and Group



The daily life in the toddler and preschool program involve opportunities for children to work in large and small groups. The children work in the classrooms using the prepared Montessori materials as well as small group work that focuses on exploring expressive language materials, creative dramatics, building materials, and studying in small groups topics of interest. Both classrooms work in groups of children that are mixed age. Younger toddlers work with older toddler/younger preschoolers and younger preschoolers work with older preschoolers. Mixed age groups are arranged, to allow for older children to share/model appropriate behaviors and the use of materials to their younger peers.

The intellectual, physical, social, and emotional progress of each child is documented in each child's file and conveyed to parents during bi-annual conferences.

The SMMS Program Plan is evaluated annually by the school director and staff. It is available to parents in the parent handbook or upon request.

Parents may request to view this SMMS childcare Program Plan at any time.

### **Pre-Admission Conference and Orientation**

It is recommended that parents schedule a time before starting at SMMS for their children to visit the school for the purpose of familiarizing your child with the classroom, teachers, and other children. This visit can help make the first day of school transition easier for both you and your child.

### **Observing the Classroom**

SMMS has an open door policy. Parents are encouraged and welcome to visit at any time during the day.

During Covid Times, all adults and preschool aged children need to wear a mask while in the building.

## **Child Observation and Assessment**

At SMMS we use a variety of assessments tools including observations and developmental checklist in order to continuously monitor and support your child's development. On a daily basis, children interact with the environment, providing the teachers an opportunity to observe and appropriately assess their skills and developmental levels as well as their interests and needs. Our curriculum and activities are then modified based on the assessments results to meet the needs of individual children. Our assessment results also indicate areas where SMMS will plan program improvement.

Developmental checklists help teachers observe, record, and evaluate the children's skills and knowledge. The checklists reflect common behaviors and expectations in our classroom. These checklists are closely linked to the developmentally appropriate activities that our program offers.

Each of these assessment tools will be administered in our classroom by your child's teachers. It is important that children are able to participate in assessment in an environment that is familiar to them. If the results of these assessments indicate, we will work along with the family to arrange for a developmental screening or referral for diagnostic assessment for the child. Results of all assessments will be kept confidential. Records of assessment shall not be disclosed to any other persons other than the child's parent or guardian, the child's legal representative, or employees of SMMS, unless the parent or guardian has given written consent or as otherwise required by law.

Twice a year we will send home written evaluations of your child's progress. to all enrolled parents.

Twice a year we will schedule parent/teacher conferences for all enrolled parents, to discuss these written evaluations and any other information parents would like to discuss. We strive to provide communication to all families in a manner that is sensitive to family values, culture, identity, and home language. This is a time to talk both about what your child has learned in our program as well as what they have to look forward to.

## Meals/snacks

**Breakfast:** If children arrive at school **before 8:00 am**, they may need to bring a breakfast to eat at school. We will provide milk for cereal and at lunch time. If you have sent a breakfast with your child, please notify the staff person on duty.

**Lunch:** Children at SMMS will need to bring a bag lunch to school every day. These lunches should be placed in a lunch box that is labeled with your child's name and should have an ice pack in it to keep foods cold. For lunch we suggest small samples of a variety of foods, such as: sandwiches, fresh fruits, vegetables, or meats and cheeses. A rule of thumb, if your child will eat it at home they will probably enjoy having it for lunch. If they do not enjoy it at home, they will not like it any better at school.

We ask that you consider proper nutrition while preparing your child's lunch. Your child is constantly busy while they are at school. Busy minds burn lots of calories. Filling their bodies with food that contains little or no nutritional value does not allow them to build strong and healthy bodies. Please pack foods from each other food groups. This will satisfy your child's hunger as well as providing them with the daily amount of vitamins and minerals their bodies need. Please follow the guidelines in the Bag Lunch Requirements form that we have included, we are required by the Department of Human Services (Rule 3) to ensure that children have foods during snack and lunch times that follow the USDA guidelines. If your child does not come to school with the proper nutrition in their lunches, SMMS will need to provide them with any food group not provided. If this occurs on a regular basis SMMS will charge a fee of \$2.00 per supplemented lunch.

**Snacks:** SMMS will provide nutritional snacks twice a day that follow the USDA nutritional guidelines.

We ask families to provide all eating utensils for lunch times, including cups and any silver wear needed, please label all items.

## Clothing/Personal Items

Your child will participate in many activities both indoors and out, some will be messy. It is important that your children be dressed in comfortable, durable and weather appropriate clothes that will be acceptable to food spills, paint, sand and water play. At SMMS we try to instill in children an enjoyment of the many different weather patterns that occur in Minnesota. We go outside at least twice a day all year, excluding times of extreme weather. Please make sure your children come to school every day with the proper gear for outdoors. During spring and summer months this entails: rain boots and jackets and during winter months jackets, snow pants, boots and mittens(that allow for play in the snow), not light weight ones. Shoes must be worn at all times during the day while indoors. Tennis shoes are recommended as sandals, thongs, or other open toed shoes may lead to unnecessary injury.

Each child needs to keep an extra set of clothes in their cubbies at all times, in case of spills or bathroom accidents. These should be stored in a bag and clearly marked. **All items that are brought to school should be labeled with your child's first and last name.** If your child does not have extra clothing and SMMS does not have the appropriate clothing for your children, we will call parents to bring in an extra set of clothes. SMMS is not responsible for lost items, such as hats or mittens.

Please discourage your child from bringing toys or personal belongings to school as they are distracting, can get lost, or cause ill feelings.

## Behavior Guidance

The adults of South Metro Montessori respect the children's dignity in all of their relationships.

Most children respond immediately and in a positive way to quiet, firm guidance from an adult. Sometimes, however, children may engage in challenging behavior. Challenging behavior that interferes with the children's learning, development, and success at play, is harmful to the child, other children and adults, and puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. Examples of challenging behavior:

physical aggression (hitting, biting, shoving, hitting with objects), relational aggression ("You can't play with us", verbal bullying), tantrums, whining, testing limits, refusal to follow directions or observe classroom rules.

We stress the positive and try to keep the words "no" and "don't" to a minimum. When persistent unacceptable behavior is exhibited by a child a "time-out" may be used. This is when a child is briefly separated from other children to help make the child aware of his/her undesirable behavior. Separation may not be used unless staff has tried less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior which have been ineffective and the child's behavior threatens the well being of the child or other children in the classroom.

These less intrusive methods must ensure:

- That each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior.
- Be tailored to the developmental level of the child.
- Redirect the child or group of children away from problems toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
- Teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict.
- Protect the safety of children and staff persons.
- Provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

A child who requires separation from the group must remain within the enclosed section of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by staff person. The child's return to the group must be contingent on the child stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation. The child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated abates or stops.

When a child exhibits persistent challenging behaviors, a teacher's first response should be to assess the function of the child's behavior: Why or what is causing this reaction? How does the staff person respond to this behavior? Is there a certain time when this behavior occurs? Through observation and communication with parents and other staff, the answer to what is causing the challenging behavior may be determined.

Separations are noted on a daily log (Separation Report). The enrolled parent is notified if the child is separated from the group 3 or more times in one day. If a child is separated five times or more in one week or eight times in two weeks, then the behavior will be observed and recorded and a plan will be developed to address the behavior documented in consultation with the child's parents and with other staff persons and professionals if appropriate. Such documentation will be placed in the child's file.

A followup conference will be set to go over any improvements in behavior. If significant improvement has not been achieved an evaluation will be made on whether SMMS is capable of facilitating the recommended treatment, if not the child will be asked to leave. If yes, specific behavior strategies will be put into effect. The followup conference should include the presence of outside professionals.

The following actions are absolutely prohibited:

- Subjection of the child to corporal punishment i.e. rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, pinching, slapping, kicking, biting, hitting, or spanking.
- Subjection of a child to emotional abuse which includes but is not limited to: name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates or frightens a child.
- Punishment for lapses in toilet habits.
- Withholding of food, light, warmth, clothing or medical care as punishment for unacceptable behavior.

- The physical restraint other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- The use of mechanical restraints such as tying.

### **Diaper Policy**

For those children who do not use the toilet consistently:

Parents are to supply disposable diaper/pull-ups and disposable wipes. We do not allow cloth diapers. Staff will check for signs that diapers are wet or soiled at least every two hours, before we go outside to play, before we put children down for a nap and once children have gotten up from a nap. Diapers that are wet or soiled are changed immediately unless circumstances make it difficult to do so. The staff will change diapers or soiled clothing in the designated changing area and not elsewhere in the facility.

Diapers are only changed on the changing table located in the bathroom. Soiled diapers are bagged and put into a hands free diaper pail. The diaper pail is cleaned and sanitized daily. The diaper pail lid must remain closed at all times and is kept out of reach of children. We ask that parents who change diapers at the start and end of the day please place the diaper in a plastic bag and place it in the diaper pail.

When children are ready to start the potty training process it is important for parents and teachers to be consistent in their routines. If your child is ready to start the process please have a conversation with their teachers to discuss consistent guidelines together.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are special events in a child's life. We acknowledge this with special recognition at our large group time and throughout the day.

For those wishing to provide a birthday snack, only packaged treats that have been purchased from a store can be served. We ask that parents do not send cakes or cupcakes, as the children most often will not eat them.

Enrolled parents are welcome, but not obligated, to share in the birthday celebration.

### **Field Trips**

We enjoy giving children the opportunity to learn by providing exciting, and educational field trips. These are conducted periodically throughout the year. In all cases SMMS requires your written permission for your child to accompany us on a field trip.

For outings away from school, we will rent a school bus to transport the children. You will be notified in advance of all excursions and special visitors through the monthly newsletter. Parents are always welcome to join us. These trips require an extra fee to be paid by parents.

**\*During Covid times, field trips will not be scheduled.**

### **Naps/Rest Time**

Children at SMMS have a rest time from 12:30-2:30.

**For those children between the ages of 33 months and 5 years old:**

- A child who has completed a nap or has rested for 30 minutes will not be required to remain on his/her cot. Quiet activities will be provided in the nap room by the staff member on duty.
- Each child will have his/her own labeled cot.
- Cots will be placed so that there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children.
- Children's heads will remain uncovered during sleep time.
- Children will sleep with foot ware on to ensure a safe evacuation for emergencies.



- Each child is to use his/her own blankets which have been brought from home. These blankets need to be labeled with children's first and last names.
- Blankets will be sent home weekly to be washed, or when it is soiled or wet. All soiled and wet blankets will be bagged and labeled.
- Napping and awake children will be within direct sight of a staff member at all times.

**For those children who are 5 and older, or parents have requested that their child no longer take a nap:**

- Children are to bring to school an activity bag, which contains 3-4 quiet activities. These activities could be: coloring books and crayons, books, activity books, stuffed animals, etc.
- Activity bags should contain a towel/blanket for rest time.
- Rest time will be 30 minutes
- After 30 minutes, children will engage in quiet activities.
- Children will be in direct sight of staff at all times.

### **Communication**

SMMS knows the importance of parents being informed of their child's daily activities. The general behavior of children can be affected by eating and resting habits. Staff will informally share with enrolled parents anything unusual in your child's habits as well as daily progress. This allows parents and teachers to anticipate a child's behavior and to better understand your child.

Parent/Teacher conferences will be offered twice a year, to enrolled parents. Teachers will send home written observations of the children's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. Additionally,

enrolled parents will have an opportunity to sign up for a conference with their child's teacher. Enrolled parents can request a teacher conference any time they have questions or concerns regarding their child's development.

As a way to build community connections, SMMS will send journals to all enrolled parents, to offer a glimpse into the daily lives of the children. These daily journals are a tool for parents to start a dialogue with their children on the experiences of the day. Journals are not an attempt to represent every child every day but a way to make visible the community experiences of our school. In addition parents are encouraged to read the documentation displayed throughout the school to give them more information on what the children's ideas and interests are.

If you ever have any questions, comments, or concerns, please express them to the Director-Shannon O'Connor, the Assistant Director- Kelly Kritsberg or your child's classroom teacher. SMMS has an open door policy. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in school activities or field trips. Several events throughout the year will be scheduled to help facilitate this participation by parents.

It is crucial that parents and teachers communicate important information clearly and with trust. Such information will always be kept confidential. A child's behavior is greatly impacted by events at home and school. When these incidents are shared between parents and teachers both have a better understanding of the children and their needs. SMMS believes very strongly in parents and teachers being partners in the education of children.

Please report any change of address, telephone numbers, emergency numbers, etc. In addition, please advise us immediately of any significant changes in your child's life, such as: changes in living arrangements, new additions to the family, divorce, or any deaths in the family.

## **Health and Safety**

**Accidents:** In the event of a medical emergency or accident, we will call 911 and then contact you. We require written authorization (found in your registration forms) prior to attendance. You or your designated substitute will be asked to transport your child in less serious situations. In the case of a serious situation, children will be transported to Fairview Ridges Hospital in Burnsville.

All teachers and Assistant Teachers are trained and certified in CPR and First Aid.

**Allergies:** Allergies are very common among young children. If your child has an allergy or food intolerance, please discuss this with a staff member in detail and fill out a health care directive plan form to provide documentation for measures needed, in the event of an allergic reaction. These will need to be updated yearly or when there is any change in the allergy. We will take appropriate precautions to protect your child's health. All staff will be updated on all children's allergies. This information will also be posted in the classroom and where snacks and lunches are served. All SMMS staff are trained on health care directives for children enrolled in our program with diagnosed allergies.

**Sunburn:** During the months of April through September, parents need to provide sunscreen for their children and fill out an authorization form for staff to apply the lotion. We ask that parents apply the sunscreen in the mornings and staff will reapply in the afternoons as necessary. Parents may also send bug spray.

**Behavioral Concerns:** If your child has an IEP established for any reason by the school district please include a copy of it, in your child's enrollment forms. This information allows us to support the children in their daily lives.

**Child Abuse and Neglect:** SMMS will report any suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Attached you will find our mandated reporting policy.

**Missing Children:** In the rare event that a child is missing, we will notify 911 and then call the parents. The information we will give the authorities is the child's name, hair color, eye color, general description, clothing, and information regarding a divorce or custody situation.

**Fire:** The Family of Christ church space is equipped with fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, and sprinkler systems. We have well defined plans for both fire and weather disaster evacuation. Evacuation plans are posted in the classroom. Monthly emergency drills are scheduled, carried out and documented. Should any emergency evacuation be carried out, parents would be notified immediately when it is safe to do so.

**Severe Weather:** In the event of inclement winter weather conditions during child care hours, parents will be called and asked to pick their children up early. Children will remain inside and staff members will remain with them until all children have been picked up by parents. For an evening/night or early morning inclement weather, SMMS will send out a group email to notify them of a school closing. Often these closings will follow the Lakeville School Districts' closings.

SMMS performs monthly fire drill, and lock down practices with the children and tornado drills April through September. In the case of threatening spring/summer weather, SMMS will follow the shelter in place plans set up in the Child Care Emergency Plan. All staff are trained on all health and safety policies and procedures.

**Emergency Preparedness:** In the event of an emergency situation where it is necessary for us to initiate a lock down procedure, the children will go to the Butterfly and Caterpillar Rooms and lock them down. We will shelter in place until such time as it is deemed safe by safe by law enforcement. Parents will be notified of such procedures when it is safe to do so.

In the Event of an emergency, that we will need to evacuate the school/ church premises, we will relocate to the Target or Speedway Gas Station

located on 185th Street. Parents will be notified when it is safe to do so. All staff are trained in these procedures.

**Illness:** We take every precaution to safe guard your children against illness. However, a normal number of illnesses are part of early childhood. \*

During Covid times, children will need to be tested before returning to SMMS, if they exhibit any symptoms of Covid.

Children should not be sent to school with the following symptoms:

- Elevated temperature of 100 degrees or more.
- Sore throat
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Red or watery encrusted eyes
- An undiagnosed rash

If your child should come down with any of these symptoms while at SMMS, you will be notified and if warranted, you will be asked to pick your child up. If parents cannot be reached, the alternate numbers listed on your registration form will be contacted. In the mean time your child will be isolated from the rest of the children and supervised by a designated staff person until someone arrives to pick them up. We ask that sick children be picked up at least 45 minutes after you receive our call.

Please notify the school if your child is absent with a communicable disease, so that we can post a notice for other parents. Children absent due to a communicable disease may not return to SMMS without a signed statement from a physician indicating when the child may return and is no longer contagious.

During Covid times, parents are expected to follow the SMMS's Covid guidelines, keeping children home when ill, reporting any know case of Covid and testing before returning when children exhibit any symptoms. These guidelines are sent individually to all enrolled parents. The exclusions are sent to every family.

In the event of a Pandemic Flu Epidemic, SMMS will follow instructions from the Minnesota Department of Public Health and CDC and the SMMS nurse consultant on procedures to take. Including closing down the SMMS facility, if deemed appropriate. This information will be communicated directly to parents.

**Medical Forms:** SMMS requires children immunization records upon admission to the school. We do accept children who are on a delayed schedule for immunizations or who have a conscientious or medical exemption. If Immunizations are not up to date because of a delayed schedule or exemption, we require parents to fill out the conscientious or medical exemption form and have it notarized. Please keep the school updated when your child receives new immunizations. Within 30 days of enrollment, the health care summary must be furnished to the school, signed by your child's health care provider. It is important that your child's physician, dentist, and preferred hospital be listed on our records.

**Medicine:** We realize that there are times when your child may need medication during the day. With your child's health and safety in mind, SMMS staff will administer only dated, labeled, and prescribed medications. Any medications must be in its original container, clearly stating the prescribed dosage, child's name, date, and physician's name. For your convenience, you may request the pharmacy split a prescription into two containers: one to remain at school and one for home.

You are required to complete an authorization form each time your child is to receive any type of medication. A record of the medicine dispensed is kept on file.

**Security:** As an important security measure, we ask that you bring your child into the school, sign them in, and see that he/she is under

supervision before leaving the building. Equally important is that you enter the building when picking your child up at the end of the day and sign them out.

We will release a child only to parent/s who enrolled the child, or to alternate persons listed by parent/guardians on the enrollment form to be allowed to pick up that child. This alternate must be at least 18 years of age. In the event parents need someone else other than those who are listed, they must leave a written note authorizing this or call and give verbal approval. Any unfamiliar person picking up children must present a drivers license to staff members before the child will be released.

The SMMS entrance is locked at all times during the day. Parents have an access code to let themselves into the building. Please do not share this code with anyone that it is not pertinent for them to have the information. We ask that parents be aware and not allow unknown individuals to enter the building and to make sure that doors close behind you as you enter and exit the building.

SMMS does not allow pets on school property at any time.

### **Privacy Rights Statement**

The data requested on the registration form and the health care summary form is to be kept in our files and will be kept in complete confidentiality. This information is shared only by the Community Service Department, the licensing consultant from the Department of Human Services, and the SMMS administration and teaching staff. The data on the registration form is needed so that we will be able to contact you when necessary, or in case of an emergency. The health care summary is required by law for the protection of all children as well as your own child. We cannot accept a child for enrollment at SMMS without this data being provided. SMMS will obtain written permission before any occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving a child would occur. Records will not be disclosed to any other persons other than the child's enrolled parent/guardian, the child's legal

representative, or employees of SMMS, unless a parent/guardian has given written consent or as otherwise required by law.

## **Grievance Procedure**

SMMS has a grievance policy that allows any person being served by the program or their authorized representatives to bring a grievance to the highest level of authority within 48 hours.

### Grievance by a parent, guardian, or child's authorized representative:

1. If there is a grievance over the child care program or procedure, direct contact with the director should be made. The complaint should be made either verbally or in writing.
2. If the individual making the complaint feels that it is being ignored or if the matter is of a serious nature, the complaint should be made to the director. The director will handle the complaint personally; they will be responsible in seeing that the grievance is handled properly and expeditiously.

### Grievance over a staff member:

1. There may be a situation where a parent or guardian has a personal grievance against a staff member. Due to the personal nature of a grievance, the director will approach the staff member and give them a chance to explain their actions. If an unsatisfactory resolution of the problem occurs, then the next step should be taken. The head teacher or director will provide in writing how the problem will be resolved.

### Grievance over facility or equipment:

1. For complaints about the facilities or equipment, the director should be consulted. They will see to the problem immediately and conduct an internal review.



The Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing telephone number is 651-431-6500 and they should be contacted when a suspected violation occurs while children are in our care.

## **Financial**

SMMS tries to maintain tuition rates that are affordable for parents and yet allow for us to hire quality teachers and to maintain an environment that offers many different learning opportunities. We review our tuition rates each fall and make changes as necessary to allow us to maintain a high standard in our teaching practices.

**Tuition Payments:** Tuition must be paid prior to services rendered. An invoice will be sent each Sunday to the email address(es) on file. Payment is due two days later on Tuesday and covers enrollment for the following week. Payments are accepted in the form of check or electronic bank transfer. On the invoice is a link to make a payment via bank transfer. There is no additional charge for this service.

If payment is not received by the end of the business day (6:00pm) Tuesday, a \$10.00 late charge will be applied. An additional \$10.00 late fee will be added each day at 6:00pm that payment is not received. Unless a prior arrangement has been made with Shannon, if payment is not received by Friday, your child will not be allowed to return to our program the following Monday.

Payments that are rejected by a bank can happen for many reasons, when this happens SMMS is charged a fee from the bank and the payment is considered late. If we receive a rejected payment notice from the bank, we will reissue the original invoice plus a fee of \$35.00. Payment of this invoice is due on the date issued. If payment is not received on that date, all accumulated late fees will be added.

**Vacation/Absences:** We offer a one week per year vacation credit to all SMMS families that can be used after 6 months of enrollment. Vacation time must be taken and cannot be used for tuition credit or carried over from year to year. The week of vacation must be taken at one time and cannot be split up into individual days. Vacation time renews on the

anniversary of enrollment. There must be at least a two month span between each week of vacation being taken. Advanced written notice must be given for vacations, to allow for the payment to be stopped at the appropriate time. If families dis-enroll at any time, unused vacation credit will be forfeited and vacation accrual will reset to the new re-enrollment day.

As we staff our center based on enrollment, we are unable to offer refunds or discounts due to a child's absence. Full tuition is required for days your child does not attend. We cannot hold spots for leaves of absence.

**Deposit:** A non-refundable deposit equal to two weeks of tuition is required upon registration. This deposit will be applied to your child's first two weeks attendance at SMMS.

**Registration Fee:** One time fee per family of \$100.00

**Dis-enrollment:** We ask that you give us two weeks written notice prior to withdrawal from SMMS. Should management of SMMS determine for any reason that a child should be dis-enrolled; parents will be given a two week written notice. SMMS will not refund any tuition in the event of dis-enrollment with less than a two week notice. If a two week notice is not provided for dis-enrollment the family will still be responsible for tuition during those two weeks.

SMMS rates are weekly rates, when a family dis-enrolls or any time a child attends a partial week, the full tuition rate is required. It is difficult for us to fill midweek spots with new children and to staff accordingly.

When enrollment allows, SMMS will allow families to dis-enroll for the summer months and hold their spots for a fall return. If this is going to be possible, we require a 2 week tuition deposit to hold the spot. If enrollment plans change for the family during their leave, written notice of permanent dis-enrollment will need to be received by July 1, for a refund of the tuition deposit. Notice given after July 1, **will not** receive a refund.

**Late Pickup:** SMMS is open for 11 hours each day to accommodate parent's varied schedules. It is especially hard for your child and staff

members of SMMS, to remain at school after 6:00 pm closing time. If you pick your child up after the 6:00 pm closing time, we charge a \$20.00 late fee for each 10 minutes after 6:00pm. The late fee is paid directly to the staff member that has remained with your child. This fee is not intended to imply that picking your child up after the school closes is acceptable. The school is obligated to call the police in any case where a child is left at school without SMMS being notified of an unavoidable emergency by 6:45.

**\*Our hours have been adjusted during the Covid pandemic and due to employee shortages, to allow for keeping the same teachers with the same groups of children as much as possible. The adjusted hours are 7-5:30. Late fees will apply to picks ups after 5:30, unless permission has been granted ahead of the late arrival. Our hours will go back to normal operating hours, when we are able to do so.**

## **Covid-19 Policies**

We are continuing our already stringent cleaning and disinfecting procedures and have stepped up many of these up to help to keep our environment as healthy and safe as possible. We are monitoring new information from the CDC and Department of Health frequently and reevaluating our policies and procedures as needed.

During this time and until further notice, SMMS hours are 7-5:30 Monday through Friday. Please let us know if you have a need for later hours. Late fees will apply to pick ups after 5:30, unless permission has been granted ahead of time.

**At this time and until further notice**, all adults and preschool aged children entering the SMMS building will need to wear a mask. Please social distance from each other when dropping off and picking up your children.

**Parents should be taking the children's temperature each morning and monitoring for any signs of illness, new guidelines consider a temperature**

of 100.04 F cause for exclusion from a childcare setting. If your child is showing symptoms of Covid-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath, etc). they will need to stay at home until symptoms have improved and they have had a negative Covid test, please notify us immediately and we will work through the exclusion guidelines with you. In the event a child comes down with symptoms while at school, they will be excluded from the rest of the group and parents will be called to pick their child up immediately.

If a family member is exhibiting signs of Covid-19 please also notify us immediately, so that we can take appropriate measures. Children who have Covid-19 or live in a household where Covid-19 has been diagnosed will need to be quarantined from the SMMS. Each incident will be taken on a case by case basis, as the guidelines are changing rapidly.

When entering the SMMS building all staff, parents and children need to wash their hands. We ask that parents do not enter the classrooms at this time, to allow for social distancing between the children and teachers. Please follow the hand washing procedures posted in the bathroom.

Please help us in working with your children on good hygiene practices and learning to cover coughs, sneezes and not touching faces. These practices will help greatly with the spread and many illnesses.

All nap items will need to be kept in plastic bags at school. Please leave all toys and extra items at home as we are trying to manage cross contamination.

For lunch time, **please send all eating utensils and cups** in your child's lunch box. Water bottles are only allowed during the summer months and at that time need to fit in your child's backpack or lunch box. Please wash these each night and label all items. We are unable to microwave meals other than a quick heat up. Please do not send Easy Macs or Frozen entrees to school unless you have already cooked them and they require just a quick warm up.



## **2022 Parent Handbook Acknowledgement**

I attest that I have read through the SMMS Parent Policy Book and understand the policies as it pertains to me, my child and the school. I understand that policies may change from time to time and that SMMS will communicate those changes to me as they occur:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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