



Parent Handbook

Gateway Montessori

2018-2019

Revision: August 2018

Table of Contents

1. Contact Information	3
2. Gateway Staff	3
3. What is Montessori?	4
4. The History of Gateway Montessori	5
5. Programs Offered	5
A. <i>Infant Montessori: 12 weeks – 18 months old</i>	5
B. <i>Toddler Montessori: 18 months – 3 years old</i>	5
C. <i>Primary Montessori: 3 years – 6 years old</i>	6
D. <i>Montessori Afternoon Program or Extended Day Program</i>	6
E. <i>Spanish: All Ages</i>	6
F. <i>Music: All Ages</i>	6
G. <i>STEM: Extended Day Students</i>	7
G. <i>Aftercare</i>	6
H. <i>Holiday Care</i>	7
I. <i>Summer Camp</i>	7
6. Billing Procedures	7
A. <i>Tuition Payments:</i>	7
B. <i>Payment Methods:</i>	7
7. Admission Criteria	7
8. Board of Directors	8
9. Classroom Placement	8
10. The Parent Guild	8
11. Parent Involvement in the Classroom	9
12. Parent/Directress Conferences	9
13. General Policies	9
A. <i>Emergency Cards:</i>	9
B. <i>Allergies:</i>	9
C. <i>Health Records:</i>	9
D. <i>Emergency School Closings:</i>	10
E. <i>Absences:</i>	10
F. <i>Arrival:</i>	10
G. <i>Dismissal:</i>	10
H. <i>Release Notes:</i>	10
I. <i>Late Charges:</i>	10
J. <i>Snacks:</i>	11
K. <i>Lunch:</i>	11
L. <i>Clothing for School:</i>	11
M. <i>Emergency Response (Child Injury):</i>	11
N. <i>Accidents:</i>	11
O. <i>CPR & First Aid:</i>	11
P. <i>Discipline:</i>	12
Q. <i>Biting:</i>	12
R. <i>Fingernails:</i>	12
S. <i>Field Trips:</i>	12
T. <i>Communications:</i>	12
U. <i>Parent Education:</i>	13
V. <i>School Calendar:</i>	13
W. <i>Birthdays:</i>	13
X. <i>Toys:</i>	13
Y. <i>Show & Tell:</i>	13
14. Health Policy	13

A.	<i>Sick Child:</i>	13
B.	<i>Communicable Diseases:</i>	14
C.	<i>Medication:</i>	15
D.	<i>Sanitizing/Disinfecting:</i>	15
15.	Policies Specific to the Infant Program	15
A.	<i>Discipline Policy for Infants:</i>	15
B.	<i>Meals:</i>	15
C.	<i>Parents are Responsible for Providing:</i>	16
D.	<i>Program Withdrawal:</i>	16
E.	<i>Signing Your Child “In and Out”:</i>	16
16.	Policies Specific to the Aftercare Program	16
A.	<i>Afternoon Pick Up:</i>	16
B.	<i>Late Charges:</i>	16
C.	<i>Nap:</i>	16
D.	<i>Snack:</i>	16
16.	Policies Specific to the Holiday Care Program	17
A.	<i>Afternoon Pick Up:</i>	17
B.	<i>Late Charges:</i>	17
C.	<i>Nap:</i>	17
D.	<i>Lunch:</i>	17
E.	<i>Snack:</i>	17
17.	Nut Allergy Policy	17

1. Contact Information

Gateway Montessori School
300 Willits Street
Birmingham, MI 48009
www.gatewaymontessori.org
gatewaymontessori@yahoo.com

Hours of Operation: Monday thru Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Phone Numbers: Office Phone 248.645.6393
Infant/Toddler Line 248.645.6399
Emergency contact 248.645.6399
Fax 248.645.6394

- To contact either the Head of School or inquire about billing, please call the office during office hours.
- To contact your child's directress, please leave a message in the office or on our voice-mail, and the directress will return your call as soon as possible.

2. Gateway Staff

Administration

Head of School: Katie Cosmi (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)

Infant/Young Toddler:

Directress: Lisa Wegner (10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Teaching Assistants: Rosanne Potashnik (10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Rachel Ryder (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Kirsten Parsons (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)

Toddler I:

Directress: Jen Imm (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Teaching Assistant: Emily Sartore (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)

Toddler II:

Directress: Kristi Sylvester (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Teaching Assistant: Carmen Parsons (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)

Toddler III:

Directress: Sherri Marx (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Teaching Assistant: Dona Morrish (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)

Primary I:

Directress: Renee Gough (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Teaching Assistant: Hannah Sell (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)

Primary II:

Directress: Beth Brnabic (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Teaching Assistant: Taylor Beakley (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)

Primary III:

Directress: Shannon Meldrum (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday)
Teaching Assistant: Rachel Carroll (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)

<u>Building Substitute:</u>	Irene Kiefer	(8:00a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
<u>Aftercare Director:</u>	Laura Avery	(10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
<u>Toddler Aftercare:</u>	Angel Wilson	(11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
	TBD	(2:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
	TBD	(11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
<u>Primary Aftercare:</u>	Laura Avery	(10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
	Katie Finkel-Nitschke	(1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., Thursday, Friday)
	TBD	(11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday)
<u>Spanish:</u>	Yolanda Richter	(8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)
<u>Music:</u>	Christine Divito	(8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Monday, Wednesday)
<u>STEM:</u>	Jenna Hage-Hassan	(12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m., Wednesday)

3. **What is Montessori?**

Montessori is a philosophy of education that was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori in the early years of the 20th century. The Montessori Method is designed to help children fulfill their potential in all areas of life by utilizing a “whole child” approach. The activities and curriculum therefore promote the development of social skills, emotional growth, and physical coordination, as well as cognitive preparation. Children learn in what is called a “prepared environment” – classrooms that are designed to support the learner in every stage of development. Montessori classrooms provide the necessary resources and opportunities for children to function in a safe, positive, and non-competitive climate, where they work at their own pace under guidance of specially trained teachers, known as directresses.

Montessori is based on a profound respect for a child’s personality, encouraging children to develop independence and build self-esteem through meaningful action. The method has helped prove that a small child can be a lover of work – intellectual work, which is spontaneously chosen and carried out with profound joy. The curriculum is based on a child’s inner need to “learn by doing”. At each stage in a child’s mental growth, corresponding materials are presented which help develop and refine abilities.

“Prepared environments,” offer materials and apparatus that are designed to engage multiple senses at once, as Dr. Montessori believed that in using multiple senses in learning, the students retain and understand the materials better. The apparatus is also designed so that the child begins with concrete manipulative materials and gradually moves to more abstract exercises as certain concepts are mastered. Many of the materials also contain a “control of error”, where the child discovers for themselves that the exercise cannot be completed if done incorrectly. The directress’ task is to observe, and assist only when necessary. This method enables the directress to work with each child individually in each subject, and guide him according to his individual interests, talents, and learning style.

Each classroom is designed to be inviting and beautiful, quiet, soothing, and peaceful. It is enriched with interesting and meaningful materials, and furnished appropriately for children. It is an environment where everything has its place, and where a child can locate what they need or desire with efficiency.

Parents often wonder about the major differences between traditional preschools and Montessori classrooms. The goal of both schools is the same: to provide learning experiences for the child. The biggest differences lie in the kind of learning experiences each school provides and the method they use to accomplish this goal. Montessori educators believe these differences are important because they help shape how a child learns, his or her work habits, and his future attitudes towards himself and the world around him.

The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method develops the whole personality of each child - not merely their intellectual faculties, but also their powers of deliberation, initiative, and independent choice, along with their emotional complements, thus “preparing the child not for school, but for life”.

Gateway offers several opportunities for Parent Education on the Montessori philosophy throughout the school year, and parents are urged to learn and understand as much as they can about the Montessori Method and how its principles might be implemented in the home environment, as well.

We would like to suggest the following as recommended reading for parents who are interested in learning more about the Montessori philosophy:

For introductory reading:

Understanding the Human Being, by Dr. Silvana Montanaro

Montessori: A Modern Approach, by Paula Polk Lillard

Montessori from the Start, by Lynn Lillard Jessen & Paula Polk Lillard

For more in depth reading:

The Absorbent Mind, by Maria Montessori

The Secret of Childhood, by Maria Montessori

Education and Peace, by Maria Montessori

4. The History of Gateway Montessori

Gateway Montessori was established in 1970, the centennial year of Maria Montessori’s birth. Realizing the value of Dr. Montessori’s insights and wishing to find an alternative to existing educational programs, a group of parents met, studied, and discussed the attributes of the Montessori Method. The result of this group effort was the foundation of Gateway Montessori House, which opened on September 8th, 1970, as a non-profit and non-denominational education corporation chartered and licensed under the laws of the state of Michigan.

Gateway is affiliated with the American Montessori Society (AMS), and all of our directresses are certified by AMS affiliated educational centers.

5. Programs Offered

A. Infant Montessori: 12 weeks – 18 months old

Full Week, Full-Day Program (7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

Class capacity: 8 Students

Teacher to student Ratio: 1adult – 3 children

This program offers an introduction to the Montessori environment. Under the supervision of a certified Montessori directress, infants and young toddlers thrive in a nurturing setting that encourages consistent, trusting relationships. The environment is carefully designed to meet the ever-changing needs of this rapidly growing age group. Infant-sized furniture and carefully chosen learning materials foster independence and physical growth and coordination. Highly trained and experienced staff provides a safe “home-base” from which the children can begin their exploration, and experience their first structured contact with other children. The program is designed to enhance motor development, language skills, and independence with age-appropriate activities. The child learns mastery of his/her environment, and through this mastery, gains trust, confidence, and self-esteem. Children also participate in beginning Spanish and Music Programs.

B. Toddler Montessori: 18 months – 3 years old

Full Week, Half-Day (8:30 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.) or Full-Day (8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.) Programs

Complimentary Before care (7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.)

Class Capacity: Toddler I – 12 students; Toddler II – 12 students

Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 adult – 4 children

The Toddler Program provides a stimulating environment for children who have established independent walking skills. This program allows for the development of independence and curiosity, and the desire for exploration. The curriculum includes lessons in Practical Life (exercises of daily living) that help to refine large and small muscle development, introductory Sensorial materials, and an emphasis on language and social skills. Children also participate in beginning Spanish and Music Programs, and a sense of ownership of place and belonging within a community is cultivated through communal activities.

C. Primary Montessori: 3 years – 6 years old

Full Week, Half-Day (8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.) or Extended Day (8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.) Programs

Complimentary Before care (7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.)

Class Capacity: Primary I – 16 students; Primary II – 20 students; Primary III – 16 students

Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 adult – 10 children

The Primary Program offers four main areas of interest to its students. Practical Life lessons are designed to help the child gain physical independence, learn to care for their environment, experience grace and courtesy, and learn how to complete a work cycle. Sensorial lessons help to develop and refine the child's sensorial skills, while the Language and Math equipment help to develop the child's reading and mathematical abilities. Geography, science, art, and music, are also emphasized. This program is geared towards developing a sense of order and an ability to concentrate, and fosters creativity and a joy for learning.

D. Montessori Afternoon Program or Extended Day Program

The Montessori Afternoon Program, or "Extended Day" Program, is generally appropriate for children who no longer require a nap. In the afternoon, children are given the opportunity to pursue more advanced work, particularly in the subjects of language and math. For Primary children older than five years old, the program is five days/week. For all other children, this program requires at least two consecutive days per week. Program modification must be requested in writing at the time of enrollment, and is subject to administration approval. Specific days must be specified in the enrollment contract.

E. Spanish: All Ages

All students are introduced to learning Spanish in this immersion program. Instruction takes place in small groups, and lessons are conducted entirely in Spanish. It is taught through songs, games, playacting, and storytelling.

F. Music: All Ages

Music and creative movement is an integral part of all programs. Lessons are individually designed to meet the needs of each age group. Rhythm, finger play, creative dance, and instruments are included in the curriculum, as well as singing and acting.

G. STEM: Primary Extended Day Students

Primary Extended Day students are offered a weekly science, technology, engineering and mathematics class aimed toward an introduction to the scientific method, extended science experiments and use of various scientific instruments including microscopes, telescopes, and electric circuits. This is an addition to our curriculum as of 2016-17 and is the result of a successful fund raising campaign within the Gateway community.

H. Aftercare

Toddler Aftercare: 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 adult – 4 children

Class Capacity: 12 students

Primary Aftercare: 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 adult – 10 children
Capacity: 25 students

These programs are designed to provide care for children who stay after classes have ended. Toddler and Primary Montessori Full-Day students begin Aftercare at 3:00 p.m. In the afternoon, all students enjoy organized and free choice play, group activities, arts and crafts, stories, and outdoor play. An afternoon snack is also provided. Sign-up for this program is available during the enrollment process, and will be offered on a Drop-In basis, space permitting (applicable daily Drop-In rates will apply).

I. Holiday Care

While the Infant Program continues uninterrupted year round, we do provide Holiday Care during periods when school is closed for the holidays or breaks. These days are indicated on the school calendar. Sign-up for this program is available during the enrollment process, and will be offered on a Drop-In basis prior to scheduled Holiday Care days, space permitting (applicable daily Drop-In rates will apply).

J. Summer Camp

While the Infant Program continues uninterrupted year round, we do provide an alternative Summer Camp Program for Toddlers and Primary children. Sign-up for this program begins in the spring. Once a family has committed to the Summer Camp Program, there will be no refunds or modifications to the weeks that have been reserved. Children enrolled for the fall programs will be given priority placement.

6. Billing Procedures

A. Tuition Payments:

For Parents who have chosen a prepaid program plan, the balance of the entire year's tuition is due before the school year begins, according to the terms stated on each enrollment contract. Parents who have chosen the deferred payment plans will be billed on a monthly basis. Aftercare and Holiday Care Programs can be billed on a monthly basis or paid in full for the entire year.

Statements for monthly charges will be issued at the beginning of each month, and payment is due upon receipt. Because a large percentage of Gateway's revenue is designated for our teachers' and our caregivers' salaries, it is necessary to collect our tuition payments on time, we, therefore, retain the right to charge a **late fee of 18% annually, at a rate of 1 ½ % per month.**

B. Payment Methods:

Payment may be made by cash, personal or business check, or credit card.

Cash: Cash payments should be made in person only. Please bring cash payments directly to the office during regular office hours. Please do not leave cash payments with the teaching or care giving staff, or in staff mailboxes.

Check: Checks should be made out to "Gateway Montessori" and may be mailed to the school, left in the office mailbox folder, or brought directly to the office. Please note that there will be a \$25.00 insufficient funds fee for any returned checks.

FACTS: New this year: FACTS is the name of Gateway's on-line billing system. This program is provided at no cost to our families, allows personal access to your tuition bill at any time, and permits families to print statements when needed. This program allows payment by credit card, ACH, or personal checks.

Please note that overdue accounts, if left unpaid, may result in your child being excluded from school until outstanding balances are paid. At Gateway's discretion, past due accounts may be referred to outside credit agencies. A student may not be able to attend classes in the subsequent semester or transition, with no grades, referrals, progress reports, or transcripts issued if his/her account is past due.

7. Admission Criteria

Eligibility: The administrative policies of the school are non-sectarian and non-discriminatory. Our school is open to children of any racial or ethnic heritage, religious belief, and economic or social class.

Admissions Procedures: Admission decisions are made by the administration and teaching staff. These decisions are based on an evaluation of the child's school visit, any school transcripts available (if transferring from another school), and the needs of existing classes with regard to balance of age, and sex, and diversity.

8. Board of Directors

A Board of Directors who serves without remuneration governs Gateway Montessori. They set policy and give direction for the school and its personnel needs. The Board also establishes rates and tuition and fees. The Board is comprised of the Head of School and past and current parents of Gateway students. While the Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day operation of all the school, long-term decisions are made with Board approval. The Board meets on a quarterly basis. All parents and staff are welcome to attend Board meetings with an appointment. Please contact the Board Chair to schedule a time.

9. Classroom Placement

The Head of School and the teaching staff make the decision determining student placement. An effort will be made to keep a balance of sex, age, and diversity in each classroom. An effort is also made to equalize the number of full- and half-day students per class. Please note that while we will consider requests made for specific classrooms in the placement process, this is in no way a guarantee that requests will be granted. Final decision on classroom placement will be completely at the discretion of the administration. Gateway does reserve the right to place children in a program that is most developmentally appropriate, regardless of age.

Age Requirements for Each Program:

Infant/Young Toddler: 12 weeks up to 18 months

Toddler: At 18 months, and up to 3 years

Primary: At 3 years, and up to 6 years (Toilet training is required for this program.)

Mid-Year Transitions:

The Head of School, along with the directress in each classroom, will determine when a child is ready to be moved to the next program. When a child begins to show indications of readiness, a meeting will be arranged to assess developmental readiness of the student for the next program, and availability of space in that program. Once readiness has been determined, and if space is available, the parent will be consulted and included in the final decision to move a student. A tentative schedule will then be set up to allow the child to begin visiting their new classroom environment during the school day. Often a child will visit several times a week for a week or more before attending the new environment on a full-time basis. At this point, parents will be contacted by the new directress for instructions specific to the new environment. While awaiting transition to a new class, students will be charged at the tuition rate for the class they are currently attending. Once the transition has occurred, billing adjustments will be made, prorated, and reconciled.

10. The Parent Guild

All parents, or guardians, of children enrolled at Gateway are considered to be members of the Parent Guild. The Parent Guild promotes the interests of Gateway through parent participation in volunteer programs and fund-raising activities, which enrich the quality of education for the students. Money raised by the Parent Guild helps provide funds for classroom materials, field trips, and playground equipment.

Annual dues for the Parent Guild are assessed yearly. The annual charge for Parent Guild dues will be \$100.00 per child or \$50.00 per child in the Infant Program. Your volunteer time and energy are also needed for the success of our school. Working as a community benefits all of our children, and the staff of Gateway relies on the invaluable help of our parents to give our children the best possible experiences in

their early education.

11. Parent Involvement in the Classroom

One of the best and most rewarding ways to learn about the Montessori approach to education is to see the class in action. Parents are very welcome to schedule an appointment to observe in their child's classroom. Simply contact your child's directress to determine what time will be most convenient and beneficial to both parties.

Parents are also welcome, and encouraged to become involved in your child's education in other ways, as well. For instance, if you have an interesting occupation, or a unique cultural background that you would like to share with your child's class, you may schedule a day to come in and speak to the group. You may also want to help them create a special food dish, or project. Feel free to speak with your child's directress about ways that you can become involved in your child's classroom experience.

12. Parent/Directress Conferences

There are two opportunities each year for parent/directress conferences. Tentative dates are included in the school calendar, and specific dates and times will be posted outside your child's classroom as conference time approaches. At this time, appointment sheets will be posted outside the classroom, providing the opportunity for parents to sign up for a conference time that suits their scheduling needs. If you are unable to attend any of the posted dates or times, the directress will be happy to make other arrangements for you. Please note that children are not to be present during these conferences.

If you wish to speak to the directress about your child at any other time, we encourage you to arrange an appointment with her. **Private or personal discussions at arrival/dismissal are discouraged, considering the directresses' primary responsibility are the children in the classroom, particularly during a time of transition.** Alternatively, you may also call the school office, and request that a teacher phone you at a convenient time.

Good communication between the home and school is essential to fostering a good learning environment. The Head of School and directresses are more than willing to discuss any concerns you may have, provided an appointment has been made.

13. General Policies

A. Emergency Cards:

The Child Information Record (emergency cards) you have been asked to fill out for your child are essential for reaching you quickly and easily should an emergency arise at the school, or specifically with your child. ***If your addresses, telephone numbers, or e-mails change during the school year, please inform the school office as soon as possible.*** It is very important that the information on these cards be kept current. It is your responsibility to personally update and/or complete new emergency cards.

***Parents authorizing a pickup of a child on a limited basis by an unauthorized person (someone not listed on the emergency card), must provide a written authorization or e-mail approval to the Head of School.

B. Allergies:

Parents should notify the office of any allergies their child may have. If your child has specific food allergies, you may wish to provide your child with an alternative snack option that may be stored at the school in the event that an inappropriate snack is served on any given day. A complete listing of allergies for all children will be posted in each classroom. If your child develops any allergy during the school year, please immediately notify the Head of School and include this allergy on your child's emergency card. **Please see our Nut Allergy Policy in this handbook.**

C. Health Records:

The State Department of Social Services requires that every school have on file a signed health form verifying a current physical. The form also acts as proof of immunization and a physical examination. These records are verified by the State of Michigan. Original copies are kept on file in the office to be accessed as needed by the staff and the Department of Social Services.

D. Emergency School Closings:

The school may occasionally be closed due to inclement weather, power outages, or flooding. Families will be notified by the administration through e-mail and TV announcements as soon as possible. Gateway will follow, in most cases, the determination of the Birmingham Public Schools regarding closings involving inclement weather. The exception may be closings for cold weather, as Gateway does not have students using buses.

Announcements will be made on WWJ-950, WJR-AM 760, Fox 2 – WJBK-TV, Channel 4 – WDIV (www.clickondetroit.com), Channel 7 – WXYZ-TV, CBS Detroit – WWJ-TV, and the CW50 – WKBD-TV.

There have been very rare instances when we have had to close in the middle of a school day – such as blackouts or water outages. Under these circumstances, Gateway Administration will contact parents by phone, and ask that they pick up their child immediately.

E. Absences:

We ask that you inform the office if your child will be absent, especially due to a communicable disease. Also, we request that if your child will be away for an extended period of time, for a vacation or for any other reason, that you inform the office as well as your child’s directress.

F. Arrival:

Please bring your child into the building, where he or she should take off their outdoor clothing and hang it up as independently as possible. Please escort your child to his or her classroom, where he or she may greet the directress and assistant. **We do ask that parents remain outside the classroom.** Calmly and clearly let your child know that you are leaving, and that you will return when school is over, and then, simply leave. This is especially important at the beginning of the school year when some children may be experiencing separation anxiety. **We ask you not to step into the classroom in order to limit disruption. The staff is well educated in handling any separation anxiety issues your child may experience.**

G. Dismissal:

At dismissal, children are encouraged to put on their own outdoor clothing. They are given lessons in putting on their coats/shoes, tying, zipping, snapping, and helping one another with putting their belongings into their bags. Once you arrive, departure can be made a pleasant experience for both parent and child by allowing adequate time and not rushing the child. Please make sure that your child’s teacher acknowledges your presence, and that your child says “goodbye” to the directress or assistant.

H. Release Notes:

Children will be released to authorized persons only. You have already provided, on your child’s emergency cards, a list of persons authorized to pick up your child. If you know in advance that someone other than yourself, or one of the persons listed on the card, will be picking up your child on a given day, *a written note of permission must be given to the school.* If it is an immediate request for that day, the office must be notified. You may be asked to leave a message on voice mail to confirm your request. If a person other than a Gateway parent is picking up your child, please acquaint them with dismissal procedures, and ask them to bring photo identification with them.

I. Late Charges:

If you are late in picking up your child for any scheduled dismissal (dismissal at 11:30 a.m., 3:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.), you will be subject to a \$1.00 per minute per child late fee.

J. Snacks:

Gateway Montessori will provide snacks for the Aftercare and Holiday Care Programs. In the Toddler and Primary classrooms, parents are required to provide snack for the whole class for a two-week period of time, 1-2 times per school year depending on class size. A snack calendar will be distributed at the beginning of the school year, detailing snack assignments. A detailed snack list will be provided, outlining appropriate snack choices. Occasionally, a class will also ask a parent to provide other supplemental items that have to do with certain activities in the classroom, such as flower arranging, or carrot cutting.

K. Lunch:

Please note that students enrolled for a half-day do not eat lunch at Gateway.

Lunch is viewed as an important time to work on social skills. Children dine at tables set with real dishes and silverware. They are guided in the use of good manners and enjoy appropriate social conversation. As Dr. Montessori believed that children enjoy taking part in caring for their environment, the children also clean up the room by themselves after eating.

Lunch should be packed in soft, plain bags, or lunch boxes, avoiding cartoon advertising. We encourage you to pack a nutritious lunch and to avoid packing candy or sugary treats.

L. Clothing for School:

We ask that the children are dressed appropriately for working in class and active play, which means that they should be dressed in comfortable clothing that they are able to put on and take off with little assistance. We discourage clothing with cartoon advertisements on them, particularly those that portray violent actions. Also, unnecessary accessories, such as purses, sunglasses, and jewelry tend to be distracting, so please leave these items at home. If your child mistakenly brings such items, he or she will be instructed to keep them in his or her cubby until dismissal.

Infant and Toddler students may wear shoes in the classroom, as sturdy footwear is necessary during this time of gross motor development. We request that Primary students wear slippers/indoor shoes while in the classroom. We suggest that a pair be left at school at all times.

All children should keep at least one spare set of clothing at school. Please be sure it is a full set of clothing, including a pair of socks, underwear, pants, and a shirt. Children who are in the process of toilet training should have several sets of clothing, in case of accidents. **Please be sure that all extra clothing is labeled with the child's name.**

M. Emergency Response (Child Injury):

Should an illness or accident result in an emergency situation; a staff member who is trained in first aid and CPR may provide basic services to your child. The Head of School or other staff member present shall be responsible for contacting 911 emergency services, while your child's teacher/assistant helps attend to the child. Immediately following the 911 call, the parent will be called. If neither parent is available, the emergency contact will be called. The child's teacher/assistant will accompany the child in the ambulance, should emergency transportation be required. A copy of the emergency card will be taken for informational purposes. Children will be transported to Royal Oak Beaumont, or St. Joseph's Pontiac, unless the parent on the emergency card lists another preference. Parents will be notified as to which hospital their child is being taken by phone, if they can be reached, or in person when they arrive at school.

N. Accidents:

If your child is involved in an accident that is serious, you will be notified immediately. If you are not contacted immediately, you will be informed in writing (in an Accident Report) and notified verbally when you pick up your child.

O. CPR & First Aid:

Gateway Staff shall be trained in first aid and in CPR, in accordance with Department of Social Services guidelines. This enables our staff to be knowledgeable in recognizing and treating symptoms of illness and injury.

P. Discipline:

Because our philosophy of education encourages a child's independence and freedom of choice, we strive to ensure that each child recognizes and is accountable for his/her actions. We have, therefore, adopted the following policy towards discipline to help us maintain an orderly, safe, and positive Montessori environment.

If a child is involved in a situation that, in the opinion of the directress or assistant, requires adult intervention, he or she is then removed from the situation, and taken far enough away to prevent further disruption. When appropriate, a diversion will be provided, and the child will be re-directed to a different activity. The child and directress will engage in a conversation about what took place. The child will be shown the result of his or her actions, and, if the question is age appropriate, will be asked what he or she thinks may help resolve the situation.

Though rare, removal from the classroom for a short duration, may be used at the discretion of the directress or assistant, and only in situations where the situation has gone so far as to warrant such action. If behavior becomes excessively or repeatedly disruptive, the directress or caregiver can notify the parent, and or send the child home for the remainder of the day. If the problem persists, the directress will conduct a conference with the child's parents to discuss a positive plan of action to help the child through the difficult phase. Should behavioral problems persist and, in the Head of School's opinion, the child requires assistance beyond what the faculty at Gateway can offer, Gateway reserves the right to discharge the child.

Q. Biting:

Young, non-verbal children occasionally express themselves by biting. When such an incident occurs, the teacher or assistant will document the incident in a report, and notify the parents of both children involved. If the biting becomes a recurring problem, a positive plan of action established by the directress, Head of School and parents, will be set up to help the child through this period. Such a plan may include, but is not limited to: providing parent education materials, having a school staff member "shadow" the child for a period of time to observe the child's behavior and interactions with other children, requesting the child's parents to seek pediatric evaluation, and meeting regularly with the child's parents to discuss possible factors influencing the behavior that could be addressed such as the child's sleeping patterns, changes in routine, etc. If biting is persistent and the behavior cannot be extinguished through the appropriate measures, the child could be asked to withdraw from the school until such time that the behavior subsides.

R. Fingernails:

Parents are expected to keep their child's nails clipped and smooth. Should a scratching incident occur, the parents of both children would be notified. The scratch wound will be washed with soap and water.

S. Field Trips:

Throughout the school year, the classes may attend a variety of field trips. Your signature will be required on a consent form for each trip. No child will be permitted to attend a school-sponsored field trip without the submission of a signed permission slip prior to the date indicated on the form. If you do not wish your child to participate in the trip, he or she will need to be kept home from school that day.

T. Communications:

Weekly Updates from the HOS and Friday Emails from directresses are the primary means of parent communication at Gateway. Our newsletter is distributed seasonally by e-mail and is also posted on the bulletin board in the school. Its purpose is to keep you informed about what is happening at school, and to remind you of special events. We strongly recommend that each parent take the time to read all

communication items as a means of keeping current with school happenings. Gateway will also send reminders and updates to our e-mail list as well as posting these items on bulletin boards and hallways. We strive to be a paper-free school and will not generally send handouts home.

U. Parent Education:

During the school year, Gateway will present parent workshops as opportunities to learn more about their child's education. Flyers will be posted several weeks prior to the date of the workshop to inform parents of specifics. These evening may be conducted by staff members, or guest speakers, and are an invaluable means for learning more about the Montessori method.

V. School Calendar:

A copy of the school calendar, outlining events at Gateway for the entire school year, is provided to each family in the information packet sent home at the beginning of the school year. Please keep this calendar handy so that you will be aware of special programs at the school, conference times, in-service days, etc. You will also be reminded of these events through our newsletters.

W. Birthdays:

Special celebrations are held on or near a child's birthday. Each class celebrates a little differently, so it is important to check with your child's directress as to how best to participate. You may also send in a special snack to share with the class, taking in to consideration any allergies of students in the classroom. We request that invitations to parties not be passed out at school.

X. Toys:

We do not permit toys from home to be brought to school. The only time an exception is made to this rule is if a child should require a stuffed animal to sleep with at naptime. If this is the case, the stuffed animal will *only* be allowed at naptime, and will need to be left in your child's cubby for the rest of the day.

If your child brings any other sort of toy from home, the directress or assistant will have to leave it in the school office, where it will need to be picked up by a parent at the end of the day. As this causes an inconvenience to the staff, and often upsets the child who wishes to play with the toy during class time, we again request that you simply leave all toys at home.

Y. Show & Tell:

The Primary teachers will arrange a day for Show & Tell when each student may bring something of interest to school. Each child will be given the chance to show his or her item and explain why it is important to him or her.

14. Health Policy

A. Sick Child:

The Department of Social Services requires us to send a child home immediately if they exhibit any of the following symptoms throughout the school day:

1. Red, or running eyes; sneezing discharging nose; if red/discharging eyes, Please see a doctor to eliminate the possibility of conjunctivitis (pink eye).*
2. Fever of 100.5 degrees or above.
3. Persistent or productive cough
4. Sores and crusts on the scalp, face, or body, if red, swollen or draining.*
(If sores appear during school hours, parents will be notified and child isolated until you arrive.)
5. Any skin eruption or rash* – same policies apply as for sores and crusts.
6. Sore throat.(If the diagnosis upon a doctor visit is Strep Throat, please inform the office immediately, as we are required to inform Oakland County Health Department.)
7. Swelling or tenderness of the glands, particularly on the face or neck.
8. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea (including persistent abdominal pain).

9. Pain and stiffness of neck and headache.
10. Jaundice – yellowing of eyes and/or skin.*
11. Seizures. (If there is no explanation or history of seizures, your child will be made comfortable and EMS will be called. You will be contacted immediately following the EMS call. If the child has a history of seizures, he/she will be made comfortable, and a parent will be contacted.)
12. Loss of consciousness – same policies apply as for unexplained seizures.

*A doctor’s note is required explaining these symptoms before the child may return to school. Some of these symptoms can be indicative of a serious health condition, and we urge you to have your pediatrician examine your child before they return to school.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS DEMONSTRATED ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS, HE OR SHE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL UNTIL SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 STRAIGHT HOURS. CHILDREN WHO ARE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL BEFORE THIS TIME PERIOD HAS BEEN OBSERVED WILL BE SENT HOME IMMEDIATELY. For the good health of our children and staff, these guidelines will be very strictly enforced, and we ask for and expect your cooperation and support. Please contact the office if you have specific questions regarding this policy.

It is Gateway's policy to keep parents informed of important illnesses, which may affect the health of their children. Gateway will actively monitor lists of communicable diseases as defined by Oakland County Department of Public Health, along with any new illnesses that may develop in our county/state. (Monitored illnesses will include not only common diseases, but also less common and new illnesses that develop within the county/state.) Parents will be notified of confirmed, diagnosed cases of these and any other serious illnesses. A case is considered a “confirmed diagnosis” when it represents the professional medical opinion of your child’s healthcare provider. Parents are strongly encouraged to obtain a diagnosis of any concerning symptoms from their pediatrician and to promptly communicate the diagnosis of a communicable illness to the Head of School. In addition, symptoms which the Head of School believes may pose a significant risk to the health of other students, yet are undiagnosed, will also be reported.

Note: In our Infant and Toddler Programs, the directress will determine if a child is exhibiting a normal, loose stool, or a recurring and more serious diarrhea. It is recognized that there are instances when a healthy child may manifest one or more of the first three listed symptoms (for example, when teething).

B. Communicable Diseases:

The following summarizes regulations issued by the Oakland County Health Division. Children who have contracted communicable diseases may be readmitted to school after these exclusion periods:

1. **Chicken Pox:**
From the time of the appearance of vesicles until
 - a) Seven days thereafter or
 - b) The lesions are healed (scabs off).
2. **Pediculosis (Head Lice) and Nits:**
When no further nits (eggs) or lice (insects) are present and treatment has been given.
3. **Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever:**
24 hours after the start of effective medication provided it is continued for 10 days.
4. **Conjunctivitis (pink eye):**
Exclude until child is under medical care and drainage from eyes has cleared.
5. **Ringworm:**
Exclude until child is under medical care. Lesions must be covered.

In cases where unvaccinated children are exposed to a vaccine preventable disease (such as measles, mumps, rubella, or pertussis), the state or local public health agency will be consulted to determine if exclusion of unvaccinated children from school is necessary (and if so, the recommended duration).

C. Medication:

If your child should require medication during the day, the school must follow a set of regulations from the State of Michigan. Following are the rules that must be complied with:

1. All medications, including Tylenol, diaper creams and ointments, antiseptics, and dietary supplements, or individual specialized medical procedures, shall be given, or applied, only with written permission from the parent.
2. Prescription medicine shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, the child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication, and shall be given in accordance with these instructions.
3. Over-the-counter medicines must be in the original container and will be dispensed on specific instruction from the parent, including exact dosage and administration times. We will not assume responsibility for determining if and when a child may need to be medicated.
4. Please fill out a medication form (available from your child's directress) every time you bring in a new medication for your child. If this form is incomplete or missing, medication will not be dispensed.
5. Medication must be stored in one of the designated areas (consult with your child's directress as to the designated area for your child's classroom). Medicine must not be stored in your child's bag or lunch box.
6. A signed medication form is required for sunscreen as well. It is not necessary to put dates or times on this form, but it is necessary for us to have in case of an allergic reaction.

D. Sanitizing/Disinfecting:

Gateway uses a 3-step bleach process to sanitize daily; all children and staff use hand washing skills before and after meals; and, universal precautions are used throughout the school for handling children's bodily fluids, as well as controlling infection. When a communicable illness has been reported on a classroom, additional cleaning and sanitizing/disinfecting will be performed to help prevent the spread of illness.

15. Policies Specific to the Infant Program

A. Discipline Policy for Infants:

Because of the young age of our children, our discipline policy is very brief:

1. Children are removed from the situation and a diversion provided.
2. If problem persists, (i.e., biting, hitting) we will have a conference with the parent and set up a positive plan of action to help the child through this time.

B. Meals:

Parents are required to bring formula, cereal, and baby food for their Infants, and lunch for their Young Toddlers. Your child's lunch can be stored in a refrigerator, if necessary.

The following policies apply to food and drink at Gateway:

1. Bottles brought into the Infant room must be capped. Both bottle and cap must be labeled.
2. Breast milk should arrive at Gateway in clean, sanitary, ready-to-feed assembled bottles labeled with the child's full name and bearing the date of collection. It will be immediately stored in the refrigerator or freezer upon arrival at Gateway and kept refrigerated until used or discarded. If the breast milk needs to be thawed, it will be done using cold running water or in the refrigerator and shall be used within 24 hours. It will be discarded at the end of a feeding.
3. All formula is to be prepared and bottled at home. Leftover formula must be discarded at the

end of each feeding. Formula cannot be put back in the refrigerator for later use and bottles cannot be reused. To prevent waste, please try to send bottles for a single feeding.

4. All foods left at the Infant room must be **clearly marked with your child's name**. This includes bottles, sandwich bags, Tupperware containers, etc. **EVEN IF THEY ARE CONTAINED IN A LUNCH BOX OR BAG** (which should also be labeled!).
5. All leftover food must be taken home at the end of the day. Food cannot be stored overnight.
6. Gateway does not provide snacks.

C. *Parents are Responsible for Providing:*

2 mini crib sheets, size: 38" X 24" X 6"

1 blanket (for students over 12 months of age) or sleep sack

Lovey, if desired, for students over 12 months of age

Diapers

Wipes

Diaper cream

Change of clothes

* All bedding, towels, and swimsuits will be sent home every Friday and are to be returned clean on the following Monday.

D. *Program Withdrawal:*

If a parent chooses to withdraw a child enrolled in the Infant Program, 30 days written notice must be given. The security deposit is then applied to the remaining tuition balance. If no notice is given, the deposit is forfeited.

E. *Signing Your Child "In and Out":*

It is very important that ALL Infants and Toddlers are signed in and out every day. This procedure is required by our licensing laws and is necessary to maintain accurate records. Our sign in sheet is posted by the Infant door and, for Toddlers, in the hallway to the right of the downstairs door. Please initial when you sign in and out. Primary students need to be signed out of the Aftercare Program only.

16. Policies Specific to the Aftercare Program

A. *Afternoon Pick Up:*

Children can be picked up at any time during the Aftercare Program, though we ask that you try to avoid coming during naptime. When picking up, please allow your child enough time to conclude and clean up his or her activities. Please make sure that the Aftercare staff acknowledges that you have arrived, and that you sign your child out on leaving.

Aftercare sign-up is available for full-day Primary- and Toddler –aged children at the time of enrollment. If you should need Aftercare for your Primary- or Toddler-aged child due to an emergency, or other special circumstance, and your child is not enrolled for the Aftercare Program, please note that "Drop-In" care is available **ONLY** in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The office must be notified at least 24 hours in advance when Drop-In care is required.
2. Each Drop-In session is billed at \$25 per day, per child.

B. *Late Charges:*

The school closes at exactly 6:00 p.m. If you are late in picking up your child, you will be subject to a \$1.00 per minute, per child, late fee.

C. *Nap:*

Students who attend a Full-Day schedule and require naps need to bring a crib-sized sheet and small blanket for naptime. Naptime typically falls between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. All bedding will be sent home each Friday to be laundered, and should be returned clean on Monday morning.

D. *Snack:*

Snack will be provided daily by Gateway in the Aftercare Program.

16. Policies Specific to the Holiday Care Program

A. Afternoon Pick Up:

Children can be picked up any time during Holiday Care Program, though we ask that you try to avoid coming during naptime. When picking up, please allow your child enough time to conclude and clean up his or her activities. Please make sure that the Holiday Care staff acknowledges that you have arrived, and that you sign your child out on leaving.

Holiday Care is available for Primary- and Toddler-aged children on days when class is not in session. Available spaces will be offered as “Drop-In” care, available ONLY in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The office must be notified at least 24 hours in advance when Holiday Drop-In care is required. Sign-ups will be provided to parents in advance.
2. Each pre-scheduled Holiday Care Drop-In sessions is billed at \$70 per day, per child.

B. Late Charges:

The school closes exactly at 6:00 p.m. If you are late in picking up your child, you will be subject to a \$1.00 per minute, per child, late fee.

C. Nap:

Students who are in Holiday Care after 11:30 a.m. will need to bring a crib-sized sheet and small blanket for naptime. Naptime typically falls between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. All bedding will be sent home at the end of the Holiday Care period to be laundered.

D. Lunch:

Please note that students who attend Holiday Care for a half –day do not eat lunch at Gateway.

For students who are in Holiday Care after 11:30 a.m., lunch should be packed in a soft, plain bag, or lunch box, avoiding cartoon advertising. We encourage you to pack a nutritious lunch and to avoid packing candy and sugary treats.

E. Snack:

Snack will be provided daily by Gateway in the Holiday Care Program.

17. Nut Allergy Policy

Gateway has established the following policies regarding nut allergies:

We do not allow students, parents, or staff to bring any peanut, tree nut or nut related products into school.

- We ask parents to exclude foods in lunches or snacks that have labels that indicate that the food “May contain”, is “Produced on shared equipment that processes” or is “Processed on equipment that also processes” peanuts or tree nuts. Thank you for taking the time to read labels on cereal and energy bars, crackers, and other foods to maintain the safety of our students.
- We cannot be considered “nut free” as we do not have the resources to guarantee what is in a child’s lunch box.
- Because each child brings his own individual lunch to school and it is impossible to guarantee what is in a child’s lunch box, a child with food allergies can be provided with a peanut /tree-nut free table with other peers who have food allergies or peers who have identifiable safe lunches.
- As Gateway provides snacks for the Infant/Young Toddler and Aftercare classrooms and one parent provides snack for all children in the Toddler and Primary classrooms, we provide

suggested items to purchase as snacks, but are unable to monitor what is sent in. A child with food allergies may consider bringing their own snack from home each day.

- Please check that your child does not have peanut butter or other peanut/nut tree related food on their clothing or hands when they enter school.

If you have a child with a nut allergy:

- Notify the school of the child's allergies at the beginning of the year on emergency cards and health forms and most importantly *notify us immediately if you become aware of an allergy mid school year.*
- Work with Gateway to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school including in the classroom, in Aftercare Programs and during school-sponsored activities.
- Provide the school with guidelines to follow in case a medical emergency occurs.
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician, including any use of Epi-Pens.
- Provide training for teachers concerning their child's specific allergies.
- Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or upon expiration.
- Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
 - safe and unsafe foods
 - not trading food with other children or eating other children's food
 - strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
 - symptoms of allergic reactions
 - how and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem
 - how to read food labels (age appropriate).

Gateway Montessori School
Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook Policies and Procedures

Gateway Montessori School's Parent Handbook can be found on our school website at www.gatewaymontessori.org . A physical copy may be requested from the school office at any time.

I, _____, the parent or
(Print Parent/Guardian Name)

legal guardian of _____, have read
(Print Student Name)

and understand the Gateway Montessori School Parent Handbook and agree to the guidelines therein.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

*Please sign and return this page to Gateway Montessori School.