

*"An exclusive way to grow and learn"*



**MONTESSORI HILLS**  
ACADEMY

**2017-2018**  
**School Year**

**Parent Handbook**

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# Welcome to our 2017-2018 School Year!

Dear Parents,

This Handbook was created as a tool to help guide you through our policies and procedures as well as our admissions process.

We ask that you please review and adhere to our guidelines. In this handbook, we consider the children's safety, health, the teachers' mission, and the parents' involvement and goals, as well as the laws and regulations to ensure a smooth and efficient operation. At times, we will need to make adjustments, in which case, we will notify you via email. We are happy to answer any questions and encourage you to call our office at 619-421-2249. You can also e-mail us at [montessorihills@hotmail.com](mailto:montessorihills@hotmail.com). We look forward to a great and successful school year.

Sincerely,

*Yoliand Valenzuela*

**Program Director**

**\*We invite you to like our Facebook page so that you can receive special news, notifications and pictures on activities that your children do at our school.**

## History:

Montessori Hills Academy was founded in January 2007, with the objective of providing high quality education to our community. In 2010 our vision expanded to our current location, where we guide children ages 2-6. In 2011 we were happy to announce our success in forming a certification program for Montessori guides and being able to offer them the place needed to practice their internship. MHA is affiliated with the American Montessori Society and is accredited by MACTE, giving us the opportunity to offer the uppermost class of education.



**Here at Montessori Hills Academy, we invite parents to get familiarized with our mission, our vision and our philosophy so that you can collaborate with us and make all this possible.**

#### MISSION:

To contribute to our society individuals who will demonstrate balance by way of thinking, feeling, and interacting, at the same time offering a quality education that will have a positive influence for many years to come, resulting in conscious, confident and successful adults.

#### VISION:

To be a leading Montessori school, providing an exemplary education for children, teachers and parents. An education which is led by our personal commitment to restoring compassion and love. By example we hope to transcend this into our students and thus our society.

#### VALUE:

The universal value which guides us all is LOVE, which is essential in the physical, social and emotional development of children and anyone collaborating in their advancement. With love, it is easier to put into practice an environment of respect, tolerance, and empathy.

#### PHILOSOPHY:

Our philosophy is based on the Montessori Method, where the classroom is merely the space provided to encourage autonomy, it is a child led atmosphere, and the teacher is only a guide. The classroom offers each child didactic material specialized for their developmental level.

## Get to know the Montessori Method .....

*Maria Montessori said, "Play is a child's work." This Montessori principle believes that children learn by doing "works." Doing "works" promotes focus on respect for self, respect for each other and respect for the classroom environment.*



### **A brief biography of Dr. Maria Montessori:**

Maria Montessori was born in Italy in 1870. In her work at the University of Rome's psychiatric clinic, Dr. Montessori developed an interest in the treatment of children and for several years wrote and spoke on their behalf. At age twenty-eight, she became the director of a school for mentally-disabled children. After two years under her guidance, these children, who formerly had been considered uneducable, took a school assessment along with "normal" children and passed successfully. Educators called Dr. Montessori a miracle worker. If mentally disabled children could be brought to the level of "normal" children, Dr. Montessori wanted to study the potential of "normal" children. She went back to school to study anthropology and psychology and finally, in 1907, was asked to take charge of fifty children from the dirty, desolated streets of the San Lorenzo slum, in the city of Rome.

## Montessori Areas:

**Practical Life:** The purpose of practical life exercise is to encourage conscious, orderly, controlled and functional knowledge out of the mass happenings in the real world. The practical life exercises help a child break down jobs at hand into easily manageable components. They all require real tools: silverware, wood, glass etc.-all times that reflect and typify an actual home environment. In this way, they provide the child a chance to learn what practical living is, and how to manage it. The main areas in the practical life exercises involve Grace and Courtesy, Care of Person, Care of the Indoor Environment, and Art.

**Sensorial:** This area deals with size, shapes and colors. All the sensorial materials are designed to aid the child in training and refining his/her five senses. Children are exposed to these concepts and challenged to make judgments about them. By using the sensorial materials, the child learns to recognize similarities and differences; to discriminate between similar objects and to graduate similar objects. Each set of materials is used as carefully and precisely as possible. Precision at this stage prepares for later work in geometry.

**Language:** Montessori children typically do not remember learning to read, as the environment is designed so that all experiences feed naturally toward the development of skills required for reading. It was not only Maria Montessori's trust in the child's power that lead her to approach reading in this natural way, but also her concept of the child as an active, rather than receptive being. She considered it the job of education not to fill the child with the techniques for reading, but to free the child for self-expression and communication. Therefore, although reading, writing, spelling, and grammar are introduced to the child in an organized phonetic method, the presentation allows the child to acquire reading skills without realizing the effort.

**Mathematics:** Math is the study of numbers, quantities, shapes, and measurements and how they relate to one another. In Montessori math, the children are introduced to the concrete sensorial impressions of numbers, the decimal system and its functions, addition, multiplication, subtraction, and division. Using manipulative materials, the child explores these concepts physically, creating a basis for more abstract operations.

**Geography/Cultural Arts:** Geography is the study of the earth including its people, resources, climate and physical features. Teaching Geography aids the child in developing a clear sense of spatial orientation. By giving sensorial impressions of the earth and showing children their relationship to it, Montessori lessons help develop a foundation of global awareness. In addition, Geography lessons explore different world cultures. Through exposure to cultural traditions and lifestyles, geography lessons allow the child to become aware of and develop a respect for all cultures, which is critical in today's global community.

Because he/she is young, the child is willing to work and is receptive to direction. He/she works for the simple joy of doing the task at hand, so early childhood is the ideal opportunity to give him/her the methods to use them.

The teacher is an important catalyst, allowing the child to repeat the task for its own sake. The teacher also helps him/her appreciate the value and dignity in the work itself. As the child builds success upon success with small tasks, he/she is able to go on to greater ones, mastering his/her small environment.

**Botany and Zoology:** Exploring the subjects of botany and zoology, will facilitate the child's development an appreciation for the understanding of the life cycle. Through specific botany works, the child develops a greater knowledge and understanding of the virtue of patience as the child is exposed to nature's seasonal changes and the growth cycle.



**Educational gardens:** *Education and nutrition go hand in hand.* Gardening at school is a simple yet effective tool for our students to understand nutrition. It gives them a hands-on experience growing fruits and vegetables. Harvesting fruits and vegetables leads to a greater understanding of the quality of our food and what goes into our bodies when

we eat. They have a better appreciation of the time and care that is put into the harvest. Gardening awakens the interest in our environment and helps see the beauty in what comes from nature. All that is grown, at some point will be eaten by the students it is a wonderful experience for them.

**To better understand the Montessori philosophy in all its aspects is through our "Journey to Discover Montessori" these conferences are held once a year. It is an amazing experience to fully explore and come to understand all that your children work with on a daily basis.**





## Why “An exclusive way to grown and learn”?

At MHA the being of each child is of great importance to us. It is our goal to provide a formation that allows them to develop their own identity. That is why it is necessary to strengthen attitudes that configure and model ideas, feelings, actions of children as well



as values that help grow harmonious development of all human qualities. We are a school interested in the potential development of children, respecting their essence, promoted through multiple comprehensive activities.

### **Mindfulness**

The Montessori philosophy promotes full concentration through autonomous work in which every child in the classroom is at all times in the here and now. We currently

have a certified teacher in mindfulness that comes in the beginning of our school year. She provides techniques to children and teachers to facilitate the adaptation process and provides tools to promote mindfulness.



### **Sport Program**

We know that physical activity promotes the welfare of body and mind and helps develop physical, motor and social skills as well. For MHA it is important that children have this experience, which is why we currently have a mini soccer field and a coach who introduces the practice of soccer in a quarter period of our school year.



### **Cooking Classes**

This is not a conventional cooking class, it is an exploratory class where children use all their senses to develop a meal. They will know what kind of food it is, color, shape, origin and the different ways to prepare and put together the entire process concluding in the fabulous experience of tasting.

**In MHA we are convinced that we are forming generations of children with a different vision!**

## Policies and Procedures for Admissions and Enrollment

### Open Door Policy

Parents are invited to visit our school to meet our certified and trained staff and to observe our teachers and students in the classroom prior to enrollment. Through the tour, interested families are given an overview of Montessori Hills Academy, curriculum philosophy, educational methods and the facility.

### Enrollment

Re-enrollment period for current students and siblings begins the first week of February; for new students, enrollment process will start the first week of March.

Upon your decision to enroll your child, Montessori Hills Academy requires a non-refundable enrollment fee to cover administrative costs at the time of registration along with a completed and signed registration form. Your first month tuition payment for August 2017 and half of June's 2018 tuition is due on July 20, 2017. These fees are non-refundable under any circumstance.

Enrollment at Montessori Hills Academy requires a family commitment for the full academic year. As we are a school environment and not a day care facility, we do not offer limited enrollment for short periods of time (By month or by week). This policy allows our classes to remain consistent and for the class to grow as a group academically. All enrolled families are expected to remain in their commitment for the entire school year. **Tuition is paid in full every month**, even if a child starts attending a few days after the month has begun or when MHA is closed for Winter and Spring Breaks and/or personal reasons. Prorated tuition will apply only if a child is enrolled after the 15th day of the month.

**Tuition:** Our school calendar begins August 9th and ends June 15th. Tuition is due on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the prior month. There will be a 5-day grace period. Payment received after the 25<sup>th</sup> will have an automatic late fee of \$35.00 added to your account. After 10 business days of nonpayment, an additional \$3.00 dollar daily late fee will be added to your account until payment is received.

**Sibling and Military Discount:** First child pays full tuition amount and sibling receives 10% discount. We also offer a military discount. **Discounts cannot be combined.** Enrollment fee must be paid in full for each sibling. There will be a charge of \$40.00 adding to your tuition for children that are not fully potty trained or \$70.00 per family.

**June's Tuition:** June's tuition should be paid in full. First half month will be paid before or with first month tuition payment. The second half will be paid May 20, 2018 without exceptions. In the event that a student does not attend in June, this fee is non-refundable. Unless, the student is withdrawn (either by personal choice or as decided by the school) before January 1, 2018 and the Administrative office must have received written notice at least 30 days in advance.

### **Extended Care:**

We offer an Extended Care Service for your convenience. An additional fee is added to your child's monthly tuition. Make sure you read carefully this policy stated on your Enrollment Agreement form.

There are also Policies and Procedures to follow, and additional fees added to your account when enrolling a child on the Extended Care Program. Late fees apply for children not picked up by 6:00 PM, a \$5.00 per minute late cash charge will apply immediately. (no exceptions) To avoid these fees, please refer to the Enrollment Agreement. We offer daily extended care with a fee of \$8.00 per hour or fraction of an hour and \$ 15.00 per family.

### **Child Admission**

Prior to admission to Montessori Hills Academy, children shall be immunized against diseases as required by the California Code of Regulations, Title 17. A copy of the child's immunization record will be required.

Montessori Hills Academy is permitted to exempt a child from this requirement if a physician provides a written statement that an immunization should not be given to the child. The form needed for this process can be attained at our front office.

### **Forms to be turned in before the child's 1<sup>st</sup> day of school are:**

- ✓ Current Admission Agreement Form (with authorized signatures)
- ✓ Identification and Emergency Information form (LIC 700).
- ✓ Child's Preadmission Health History Report form (LIC 702).
- ✓ Physicians Report-Child care centers (LIC 701)
- ✓ Consent for Medical Treatment form (LIC 627).
- ✓ Notification of Parent's Rights (signed and dated receipt LIC 995).
- ✓ Personal Rights (signed and dated receipt LIC 613A).
- ✓ Documentation required for health-related services (e.g., blood glucose monitoring and nebulizer care LIC 9166).
- ✓ Authorization for dispensing medication.
- ✓ Personal Beliefs exception to required immunizations (CDPH 8262).
- ✓ Permission to publish picture and videos

All these forms will be given to you once child is enrolled

**\*If any fees are not paid in full by the required due date or any paperwork is missing, child will not be admitted into school on their first day of attendance.**

## **Restraining Orders**

It is a requirement that Montessori Hills Academy is notified of any restraining orders or any court orders that involve your child. In such case we need to be notified if you share custody of your child.

**Period of assessment of both parties:** We accept students of varying learning styles and abilities. However, we do not accept students who potentially may be disruptive to the class or will require excessive individual attention from staff members. New students will be admitted with a 30-day probationary status.

Parents need to voluntarily have their child observed and assessed when the lead teachers recommend a behavioral observation report. Refusing to comply with this recommendation may result in a temporarily or permanent discharge. When the assessment during this trial period results in a recommendation from the MHA Academic Director to have your child assessed by the Local School District, he/she may be required to be temporarily withdrawn from MHA, until written proof of evaluation is submitted.

**Absences and Vacation:** Monthly payment is required even in the event of the child's absence, or if the school closes due to holidays, winter and Spring breaks and or staff professional growth workshops. Please see MHA School Year calendar for schedules and dates. Calendar may be subject to change.

**Notification of change:** Registration forms are to be kept up to date at all times. The Administration must be able to contact parents in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. Any changes of phone numbers or address should be reported A.S.A.P. If you have a cell phone, please make sure the number is on the emergency information form.

**In the beginning of the school year all students are required to bring supplies to school.** You will receive a school supply list a month prior the starting date of our academic year.

## **Punctuality/Sign in and out procedure**

**Arrival Time:** Please be sure your child is at MHA by 8:30 am for Children's House (Rooms 3, 4, 5 & 6), and at 8:45 am for Toddler Community (Rooms 1 & 2). Class begins 15 minutes after arrival time for each level. Circle time and lessons are presented and it is important for them to be here.

Please be respectful to others; when a student is late, you may take your child to their classroom silently. Since the class has already started, wait until one of the teachers receives your child at the door.

You are required to sign your child in and out each day using our Pro care system. If for some reason the system is not working or the system is not reading your fingerprint, please make sure you sign in or out on our daily lists, which will be in our reception area. When you forget to sign-in your child, they will not be on the system.



Your child will be released to authorized persons only (designated in advance by you on the emergency information form). Identification will be required when someone other than yourself arrives to pick up your child. A list of persons who may not pick up your child, including a valid court order must accompany this request when it involves a parent.

Safety is a must at our school; please help us maintain an up-to-date list of authorized persons that may pick up your child in case of an emergency as well as any change in phone numbers or addresses.

## Health and Safety Guidelines

Children are not allowed to attend school if they are sick. This is to prevent the spread of illness to other children and to the staff as well. We reserve the right to determine whether or not we think your child is too sick to attend school. If your child should become ill during the day they will be isolated until a parent or authorized person is contacted. Please pick up your child within one hour of receiving our phone call. We ask your cooperation in reporting any contagious illness your child may have. To avoid any spread of diseases, Montessori Hills Academy will require that your child stay at home when they are sick.

Please allow 24 hours after the symptoms have passed before you bring your child back to school.

If your child becomes sick during school hours, we will inform you for immediate pick up; in case we can't reach you, we will contact the next person listed in our records. You will be notified immediately if your child is injured and needs medical attention beyond basic first aid. In the event a parent cannot be reached, a seriously ill or injured child will be sent to the nearest emergency facility by private staff car or ambulance; a parent will be notified immediately.

**Insurance:** Minor accidents and Incidents that need medical attention may occur from time to time. Therefore, Montessori Hills Academy has all the students insured if something were to happen while in the care of MHA. Parents will be notified of the procedures to follow in case it is necessary.

**Medication policy:** Your child may not carry medication in their pocket, lunch box or backpack. Medication including over the counter (cough drops, Tylenol, etc) must always be labeled with the child's name and accompanied by the doctor's prescription, if you require us to administer the medication. You need to fill out a parent request form to administer medication in order for your child to take medication while at school. All medication should be turned in the reception area with a prescription and forms should be field out. Please do not give any medication to our teachers, however please let your teacher know that medication was left in the office for your child.

**Head lice:** Mass screening of all students in a classroom and/or school does not control the spread of head lice. Rather, the spread of head lice and nits can be minimized with routine inspection by all parents and full treatment of those students with live head lice.

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Routinely checking their child's head once a week.
- Telling their child's school, close friends, etc., that their child has head lice.
- Ensuring that full, proper treatment has been completed.
- Students must remain home for **three days.**

**Personal hygiene:** Personal hygiene is an important factor in maintaining a healthy, safe and happy environment for your children. Each child should arrive well groomed daily. Before arrival please pay special attention to the following:

- Washed face
- Clean and trimmed nails
- Hair combed
- Clean uniform and shoes
- Clean lunch box
- Washed blankets
- Children in diapers must arrive with a fresh diaper.

## **Behavioral difficulties and school discipline rules**

Redirection is the first choice for the teachers at MHA. When a child is being constantly disruptive, the child is motivated to engage in a different activity to distract them from

whatever is causing that behavior. If these methods fail, parents will be notified, and a parent teacher conference will be scheduled to work together.

**Damaged materials:** Montessori Hills Academy's beliefs support the theory of learning from mistakes, therefore if a student's breaks or damages any classroom material on purpose, parents will be notified to come up with an action plan to repair it or replace it.

**Biting policy:** If your child bites he/she will be sent to the office and the parent will be notified. The second time the child bites, a parent will be called and asked to take the child home for the remainder of the day; if a third time occurs they will be suspended for three days. The fourth time your child bites they will no longer be allowed to attend our school.

**\*In a toddler's community (room 1 and 2), this reaction may be common. The suspension or withdrawal will be under the sole discretion of the General Director.**

## Dress Code

Uniforms are mandatory at Montessori Hills Academy



### **Mondays and Wednesdays:**

- **Boys:** School Polo shirt, navy blue or khaki pants, school sweater or hooded sweatshirt, black or navy blue shoes.



- **Girls:** School jumper and blouse, school sweater, hooded sweatshirt, school polo shirt and navy blue or khaki pants, navy blue or black "Mary Jane" type shoes.





### **Tuesdays and Thursdays:**



### **Boys and Girls:**

- Spring and summer: School baby blue t-shirt, and navy-blue shorts and navy blue/black tennis shoes.
- Fall and winter: School tracksuit and t-shirt, and navy blue/black tennis shoes.

### **Fridays:**

Fridays are "free dress" days. **Your child may wear anything except rain boots, open toe or open heel shoes.**

**Personal items:** Please make sure you label your child coats, sweaters, bedding and lunch boxes as there are many that look alike. Montessori Hills Academy is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items. Please avoid sending your child wearing any type of jewelry.

**UNACCEPTABLE: Shoes with glitter, character, lights or patterns.**

## **Food/Beverages**

Parents/Guardians need to provide for their child's lunch. Please do not send any candies, chewing gum, sweets or junk food. Consider foods such as cheese, yogurt; fruits (if your sending grapes, please make sure you cut them in half), vegetables, bread, cereal, crackers, etc. for your child's lunch. Remember, a healthy breakfast will ensure good school performance. **MHA is a nut free environment due to severe allergies in some students. Please make sure your child's lunch is nut free.** Also, as a safety measure, no metal lunch boxes are allowed.

If a healthy Lunch is not provided or was forgotten, Montessori Hills Academy will provide an emergency lunch with a cost of \$10.00 dollars.



## Weekly items needed

Please send in a small backpack with a change of clothes every Monday with your child's name. If your child needs to change, you will take home the backpack and bring it again the following day. Otherwise, you will take home the backpack every Friday to check/change the clothing items.

**Blanket and sheet (rest time):** All students must bring a clean crib sheet and a small blanket to school every Monday for rest time. They must be packed in a pillowcase, labeled with your child's name. On Friday you will take them home for washing.

**Children in Diapers:** Parents/Guardians need to provide enough diapers, baby wipes and a change of clothes every day. 3 or more accidents in a week are considered NOT fully potty trained and a \$40.00 fee will be added to your monthly tuition.

**Toys:** Toys of any kind are not allowed in our school unless the teacher requires it for any academic activity. Safety is our priority. Montessori Hills Academy will provide the necessary materials your child will need for each activity performed in their classrooms.

## Celebrations, Birthdays & Fundraising events

**Celebrations:** We respect each family's beliefs and traditions. Please let us know if you don't want your child to participate in any of our festivities.

**Birthdays:** If you are planning a party and would like to send out invitations for your child's peers, you may do it through the teacher ONLY if every child in the class is invited. If not, please hand out the invitations yourself outside the school premises.

There is a special Montessori celebration for birthdays named "**the Celebration of Life**". Please talk to the teacher to setup the date and time of your child's celebration a week prior and stop at the reception for a sheet with more details and suggestions.

**No Cupcakes, cookies or any type of sweets are allowed.** You may bring healthy snacks/food or party favors to share with your child's peers.

**Photographs and Videos:** Our programs will include activities that will be recorded and photographed. Your child may appear in these recordings and/or photos by signing the consent form in the enrollment packet. If you do not want your child's photograph to be displayed please let us know.

**Fundraising Events:** Montessori Hills Academy plans three fundraising events per School year. All proceeds are used for improvements to our facility and we want to thank all the parents in advance for your participation. Details are sent out a month prior to the event.

**Field Trips (Children's House):**

One parent or an adult relative may accompany each student on the field trips. At least two field trips are scheduled for the school year 2015-16. Details will be sent a few weeks prior to each field trip, through the parents' emails and monthly newsletters. Field trip dates may be subject to change and restrictions may apply for some classrooms.

## Withdrawal of students and refunds

If your child is withdrawn from our program before January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, your deposit for half of June 2018 will be refunded.

**Cancelation of Agreement:** To withdraw a student from Montessori Hills Academy, a parent must submit **a 30 day written notice (letter or email)** to the Administrator. Please include in your letter the following:

1. - The reason for withdrawing your child and the last day your child will attend
- 2.-. We would like to know if you are satisfied with the service provided.

All financial/administrative obligations must be taken care of before the student is withdrawn from school. Parents/Guardians may cancel the contract at any point during the scholar year. Monthly dues need to be paid even if the child only assists for a few days during the last month.

Montessori Hills Academy reserves the right to remove a student at any time if, in the sole judgment of the school, that students conduct, progress, or influence on campus is not in keeping with the Schools accepted standards, as determined by the Directors sole discretion.

Montessori Hills Academy reserves the right to ask a parent to withdraw his/her child if the parent become abusive to the staff or to other children, as determined by the Directors sole discretion.

**Thank you for choosing Montessori Hills Academy**  
**and for giving us the opportunity to offer your child**  
**an exclusive way to grow and learn ...**

