



Mission Statement

The mission of the Bloomington Montessori School (BMS) is to guide students from self-discovery to global citizenship through Montessori education.

Vision

Our vision is to become a center for peace and education within our community.

Values

At Bloomington Montessori School, we value...

- *A love of learning*
- *Nurturing peaceful, self-reliant, empowered citizens*
 - *Care for ourselves, each other, and the Earth*
 - *Open and honest communication*
- *Working hard and working together as a welcoming community*
- *Awareness and appreciation of all the ways in which humans are diverse and actively work toward equity*

**Bloomington Montessori School
1835 South Highland Avenue
Bloomington, Indiana 47401
www.bloomingtonmontessori.org
812-336-2800**

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Bloomington Montessori School; we are glad you are a part of our community! This handbook of policies, procedures, and philosophy is designed to help acquaint you with the workings of your school. We hope it provides a picture of our school culture, unique to our home here in Bloomington, and our pedagogy, shared by over 7,000 certified schools in 110 countries worldwide with a shared vision for nurturing independent, compassionate critical thinkers. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Bloomington Montessori School (BMS) is a privately funded, non-profit (501[C]3) school founded in 1968. Since 1971 it has been a member of the American Montessori Society (AMS) and became an accredited school in 2021. Our teaching faculty consists of a unified group of highly trained certified Montessorians, and we continue to focus on organizational learning, reflection, and improvement. The school offers equal opportunity to all and is nondiscriminatory.

MONTESSORI PEDAGOGY

About the Montessori Method

Montessori education is a child-centered approach based on scientific observations of children's interests and development. It was developed by Maria Montessori, an Italian scientist, activist, and educator. The key components of a Montessori classroom include highly trained teachers, a carefully prepared environment, the hands-on materials central to Montessori, multi-age classrooms, and child-directed work throughout an uninterrupted work period. The focus is on building 21st-century skills such as executive function, social and emotional intelligence, critical thinking, creativity, and work habits throughout our nine-year program here at BMS. This is done through a spiraling curriculum that builds upon prior knowledge and adds complexity and depth of concepts throughout the phases of children's education in the school. Concepts include all typical academic areas as well as the Early Childhood sensorial curriculum and a nine-year peace curriculum that includes age-appropriate lessons and practice in areas such as self-care, mindfulness, grace and courtesy, conflict resolution, living in a community, stewardship of the Earth, and community and global social and environmental issues. Montessori was, perhaps above all, a brilliant and insightful observer. Many of the principles authored by Montessori have since been supported through modern sociological, psychological, and neurological research, including the following (Lillard, A. S. 2005. *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. Oxford University Press).

- Montessori's theories of child development include the concept of "Sensitive Periods", when neurological development and innate interests are most attuned to certain types of learning.
- Montessori once wrote that "the hands are the instrument of man's intelligence", and believed that movement and cognition are connected and enhance each other.
- Humans thrive most when given freedom within limits.
- Curiosity and interest enhance learning, and spontaneous exploration of ideas should be encouraged.

- Extrinsic rewards negatively impact independent motivation, and instead, intentional support should be given to the lifelong development of intrinsic motivation.
- Social learning is beneficial, and the four primary mechanisms of learning from peers include incorporation, distributed cognition, active learning, and motivation.
- Adult interaction should be carefully designed for optimal support of learners. The role of the teacher includes preparation of and link to the environment, kind and firm accountability, careful observation and interpretation, engaging guidance through the curriculum, and non-invasive assessment.
- Concentration and self-regulation are learnable and vital tasks.
- An organized, beautiful, and orderly environment is beneficial to children.
- Children are spiritual and capable beings; thus, the whole child should be attended to by the curriculum.
- Concrete learning with scaffolding to deeper and abstract concepts aids children's comprehension and engagement (this is often visualized as a spiral).

For more information on the Montessori Method, please visit the American Montessori website:

<https://amshq.org/Montessori-Education/Introduction-to-Montessori>

For more information on modern research related to Montessori, we recommend *MONTENESSORI: The Science Behind the Genius* by Angeline Stoll Lillard.

For more information on Maria Montessori and the history of the Montessori movement, please visit:

<https://amshq.org/Montessori-Education/History-of-Montessori-Education>

American Montessori Society

There are several well-respected Montessori organizations. Bloomington Montessori is affiliated with the American Montessori Society (AMS), a not-for-profit organization with over 13,000 member schools. We use the AMS Standards of Excellence as an organizational evaluation tool and AMS parent and professional development resources. For more information on AMS, please visit:

<https://amshq.org/About-AMS>. The office also has a Parent Lending Library with resources on Montessori, Positive Discipline, and child development. If you are interested in borrowing a book, please stop by the office.

Learner Outcomes

In our effort to offer the highest quality Montessori educational experience, Bloomington Montessori has adopted the following Learner Outcomes (as outlined by the American Montessori Society [Standard 4.2]). These Learner Outcomes serve as a framework to

discuss our vision for and efforts toward the holistic development of the children we serve.

It is important for our stakeholders to be aware of these Learner Outcomes for many reasons, including:

- To better understand the mission of Bloomington Montessori School and the role it serves in our community
- To prepare families for BMS's expectation of support by families in the development of these skills and values
- To better understand the context within which teachers will be discussing a child's progress through our curriculum

These six learner outcomes are complex topics, each involving multiple stages of growth and learning. Through our spiraling curriculum, our goal is to develop these skills to an age-appropriate level throughout a child's nine-year experience here. Graduates of Bloomington Montessori build the tools necessary to continue this developmental journey long after graduation.

Autonomy and Independence

The word "autonomy" finds its roots in the concept of "self-governing." In a Montessori context, this includes maintaining control over one's actions, feeling confident in making independent choices, and having a strong sense of self.

Confidence and Competence

The self-assurance that comes from recognizing and having faith in one's own abilities and talents is one of the most empowering tools we can offer children. Through a greater sense of ownership of their own achievements, children become energized by their own capability.

Academic Preparation

As in most schools, we strongly believe in children's need to be prepared with knowledge and skills that will enable them to navigate education and life success. This includes a well-rounded language, mathematics, biology, physical science, geography, and history curriculum. Additionally, we focus on process-centered goals such as developing critical thinking skills, problem-solving, work habits, and creativity. (See Scope and Sequence for detailed information.)

Intrinsic Motivation

To find the work of life internally satisfying creates a drive that propels children toward productivity and success in all areas as they grow. By avoiding extrinsic motivations (such as rewards and punishments), we leave space for this vital inner development of the child.

Social Responsibility

The idea that we should strive to benefit society and care for ourselves, each other, and the Earth instills a sense of stewardship in children. Our Cosmic Curriculum explores the interconnection of all living things, encouraging the development of environmentally aware global citizens.

Spiritual Awareness

Spiritual awareness is a process by which we explore our own being and thoughts. We help children develop a sense of mindfulness, purpose, and possibility. This includes the development of a growth mindset and comfort with self-reflection.

STUDENT SERVICES

Bloomington Montessori is a school that thrives on its ability to fulfill the vision of Maria Montessori through individualization to meet the needs of each child whenever possible. This can include a large team of support and a wide variety of accommodations. The Student Services administrator can help you understand and navigate this process.

Student Services typically fall into the following categories:

- Academic Accommodations
- Behavioral Accommodations
- Physical Accommodations

There are three tiers for all student service areas, denoting the extent of intervention needed.

For more information on our Student Services practices, please contact our Head of School at headofschool@montessori.k12.in.us or Assistant Head of School at assistanthos@montessori.k12.in.us.

OBSERVATION

Teacher Observation

Observation is the tool with which Montessori teachers gain insights that inform their lessons, interactions, and environmental design. Your child's educational experience is tailored to their unique needs through careful observation, record keeping, and informed teacher interpretation. This method collects non-invasive data on your child's interests, behaviors, and progress.

Parent Observation

We encourage parents of students and prospective students to develop their own practice of observing their child(ren) both at home and school. At school, we provide observation rooms with a one-way mirror in each classroom for this purpose. This method provides parents with "no-impact access" to the classrooms, and observers can call the office to

schedule a 15-minute window to observe their child. These rooms are meant to provide a reflective space to focus on your child and his/her classroom and development. Using the observation room, you agree to honor the privacy of those you observe by keeping your observations respectful and confidential.

Professional Observations

Visiting teachers or students may, with Lead Teacher approval, come into the classroom to observe. Visitors will be introduced to the Lead Teacher and given information on observation etiquette specific to the classroom they visit. No pictures of children may be taken during observations.

BMS Benchmarks

Our school's learner benchmarks are found here on our website: [BMS Parent Resources](#). It is important to remember that children move at their own pace through the curriculum; thus, concepts are not broken into specific months of the year or grades. Children move through concepts as they show readiness in the classroom.

MONTESSORI RESOURCES

BMS is committed to Parent Education and provides forums and events throughout the school year designed to answer parent questions and give information on Montessori and our school. We are always interested in suggestions for new topics and partnering with parents with backgrounds in Montessori, child development, or education.

The BMS main office also offers a parent library where parents can borrow copies of recommended books; available topics include Montessori, Positive Discipline, social justice, and child development. If you are interested in borrowing a book, please stop by the office. If you have a specific question, please reach out to teachers or administrators, and we will do our best to answer your question or link you to resources!

NONDISCRIMINATION

General Nondiscrimination Policy

Bloomington Montessori does not and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or any other legally protected characteristic in any of its activities or operations. These activities include but are not limited to hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, provision of services, admission of students, and administration of educational programs or policies. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, children, parents and caregivers, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. We will make all hiring and firing decisions based on merit, qualifications, and abilities.

Individuals with questions or concerns about discrimination or harassment at Bloomington Montessori are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of

someone in the administration. Individuals can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. All reports will be investigated. Anyone engaging in unlawful discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

Disability Nondiscrimination Policy

a. Bloomington Montessori School does not discriminate against any individual based on disability, including against applicants or members of their families, students, or members of their families.

b. Applicants and students with disabilities and members of their families have an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations provided by Bloomington Montessori School.

c. Bloomington Montessori School may not deny admission to or disenroll a child based on the child's disability or because Bloomington Montessori School regards the child as having a disability.

d. Bloomington Montessori School will make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures when the modifications are necessary to afford goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities.

e. Requests for reasonable modifications beyond the scope of daily classroom accommodations may be directed to Bloomington Montessori School's Head of School, either formally (as in writing) or informally (as in orally), and will be addressed in collaboration with the Director of Montessori Programs within three (3) business days.

f. Bloomington Montessori School will not make decisions about admission, continued enrollment or re-enrollment, or needs for reasonable modifications based on assumptions, myths, or stereotypes about people with disabilities. Before making any enrollment decision where disability or behaviors associated with a disability is considered as part of the decision-making process, Bloomington Montessori School administrators will engage in an interactive process that includes consultation with or consideration of information provided by the following individuals: the child's parents or guardians, current teacher(s), anticipated teacher(s), and any persons providing support, therapy or other services to the child, to determine whether reasonable modifications to Bloomington Montessori School policies, practices and procedures could allow the child to attend Bloomington Montessori School;

g. If Bloomington Montessori School denies admission, continued enrollment, or enrollment to a child with a disability, Bloomington Montessori School shall outline in writing its reasons for the denial, including the names and titles of all persons consulted, any modifications proposed or considered, and the reasons, if any, why Bloomington Montessori School decided reasonable modifications were not available or would not allow the child to attend Bloomington Montessori School.

h. Bloomington Montessori School will not retaliate against or coerce in any way any person trying to exercise the rights of any person under this Agreement.

Admission

Bloomington Montessori will accept any child within its licensed capacity, provided its facilities and staff are adequate to meet the child's needs and the child's admission does not adversely affect the care given to other children.

At Bloomington Montessori School, we use our Enrollment Policy to prioritize applications to make enrollment offers. Factors used in this process include previous family attendance, previous Montessori experience, and date of application. For a full summary of our Enrollment policy, located in our Policy Handbook, please visit the website or your FACTS Family portal under Resources.

Re-enrollment Process

Families receive an Intent to Return form mid-January, due within two weeks.

- If an Intent to Return form is not received by the deadline, the seat will be opened to the Wait List.
- Enrollment packages are generated and distributed to families by the end of January.
- Signed contracts and deposits are due back in mid-February. The seat is opened to the Wait List if a contract is not returned by the due date.

Parent/Guardian Agreement

Bloomington Montessori is a school with a clear mission to provide the highest-quality education, including a curriculum and values centered on Montessori philosophy. This is most effective when we partner with families sharing our children's vision. The Parent/Guardian Agreement serves to facilitate this partnership by:

- Clarifying expectations between the school and parents
- Conveying the need for a respectful, open, and trusting relationship between staff and parents
- Solidifying a common purpose in service of the child

For a copy of the Parent/Guardian Agreement, please visit the website at [BMS Parent/Guardian Agreement](#). The Parent Guardian Agreement must be signed annually by all caregivers assuming primary responsibility for the enrolled student(s).

Financial Matters

Every returning family enrolling a child in BMS for the fall term will receive an enrollment offer in February For the current tuition rates and fees schedule, please visit our website at [BMS Tuition Rates and Fees Schedule](#).

SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMMING

Elementary After School Care

BMS elementary students can participate in Aftercare, an after-school program organized by BMS. Lower Elementary has 20 spots, and Upper Elementary has 13 spots. The aftercare program is offered on regular school days when school is open, from 3:30-5:30 pm, and is enrolled monthly and charged to your FACTS account. Children can enjoy free play or join a group activity.

Summer Camps

BMS offers (4) two-week summer sessions. These summer enrichment classes cover thematic topics such as mind and body, Spanish, nature, cooking, camp challenges, music, and artistic expression. Specific information regarding these sessions (dates, classes to be offered, etc.) will be provided in January of each school year.

NUTRITION

Nutritional Policies

Our genuine concern for your child's development and health is the primary reason behind the BMS nutritional guidelines. As a participant in the National School Lunch Program, BMS serves hot lunches that meet the nutritional requirements of the program, providing 30% of the FDA-recommended daily nutrients. Also, classrooms offer daily healthy snacks. We strive to model lifelong healthy eating habits by limiting refined sugars and encouraging a balance of whole foods, including proteins, whole grains, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Any food brought to school (lunches, classroom celebrations, etc.) should adhere to this model. Please do not bring candy or sugary drinks to school; use your best judgment for all other items.

For more information on our nutritional guidelines, please visit

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/> or

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>.

Please note we are a *nut-free campus*, which includes all peanuts and tree nuts. We ask that parents not send these items to school for lunch or Aftercare snacks.

Nut-Free School

FOODS PROHIBITED AT BMS EVENTS OR ON THE BMS CAMPUS ARE PEANUTS AND TREE NUTS.

Food allergy is a growing public health issue affecting almost every school in the United States. At BMS, we strive to be maximally inclusive and flexible; to include growing, cooking, and eating food together as part of our Montessori curriculum; and to teach all children, with and without allergies, independence and life skills; however, when food allergies are life-threatening for a relatively large and growing contingent of our children, as peanut and nut allergies can be, the BMS Board has determined that such a risk cannot

be taken.

For more information, visit www.foodallergy.org/allergens/, a resource recommended by local allergists. For a complete copy of our Nut-free Policy, please see the Policy Handbook on our website: [BMS Policy Handbook](#).

Lunch Program

Elementary

BMS serves lunch every day that school is in session. Menus are published in advance. All students may participate in the BMS elementary lunch program. Parents may select lunches in their FACTS Family Portal from the 8th through the 18th of each month. Students are responsible for bringing their own lunch to school on days not selected. Billing for the lunch program will be charged to your FACTS account. The administration, teachers, and kitchen staff cannot change your menu selections after the menu closes.

Early Childhood

All-day Early Childhood students are not eligible to bring their own lunch to school and must enroll in the school's hot lunch program.

Half-day Early Childhood students may choose to participate in the lunch program, which meets daily from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; however, there is only space for 15 students to participate. Spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis, with students enrolled in the lunch program during the previous school year and their sibling's given priority. Students new to the lunch program will be enrolled based on their date of application to the lunch program. Early Childhood half-day lunch participants are required to pay a deposit of one month's fee, which is due with the February 15th deposit.

If your child has any dietary constraints, please speak to someone in the administrative office. We will require a physician's written documentation of these constraints to keep on file in the office and kitchen.

SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL

Parent Volunteer Opportunities

"It takes a village," and BMS is excited to collaborate with you in caring for your child. We want your insights from home and encourage parents to become involved here at school. We strive to provide various opportunities so that parents can contribute in ways they feel most comfortable. Opportunities include:

- Serving on the Board of Directors
- Serving on the Parent Action Committee (PAC), helping at school events, etc.
- Giving presentations to classrooms based on your special talents or knowledge
- Supporting classrooms by hauling away recycling, sewing projects, or washing and returning laundry

- Helping maintain the campus with your skills such as carpentry, painting, or landscaping
- Have another idea? We'd love to hear it!

Parent Volunteer Hours

There is a **10-hour/year minimum** volunteer requirement for each family. For families who have not met this minimum requirement, a **\$350** inactivity fee will be charged to your FACTS account on May 1st. For this reason, please track and log your volunteer hours and report them to the office at officeassistant@montessori.k12.in.us or your child's teacher.

Philanthropic Opportunities

BMS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that supports a philanthropy culture, encouraging families to give their time, talents, and dollars in ways that best suit their interests and resources. To do this, we strive to offer numerous opportunities for families to give back to the school and the Bloomington community. Please check out our development flyer to learn more here: [BMS Fundraising and Development Information](#).

A few of these opportunities include:

- Donations to the annual fund-Like other schools and colleges, BMS relies on donations to help meet annual expenses and provide funding for critical projects.
- Dine Out Series-join other BMS families at local restaurants for a fun evening out, all while raising money for the school!
- Montessori gear-show your support (literally) with the purchase of BMS logo gear.
- Shopping classroom bake and craft sales to help children raise money for service projects.
- Participate in school community events such as the Fun Run!

COMMUNICATION

School Communication

Clear communication between the school and parents is vital to success at BMS. As a parent, you are responsible for reading the BMS bi-weekly newsletter and all emails from the school, including the Lead Teacher, Head of School, Board, and other school personnel.

In addition, vital information is provided on the classroom bulletin boards and at parent meetings. Please make every effort to attend all relevant meetings and inquire if you are unsure about whether your attendance is mandatory.

We also encourage all parents to attend Parent Forums and classroom events. While these are not mandatory, they provide valuable information about BMS, Montessori education, and your child's time here.

BMS Newsletter

Every other Friday, you will receive an email that includes vital information for the following two weeks of school, including current calendar items, specific classroom special events, celebrations, volunteer needs, information about meetings, fundraising opportunities, general information, and reminders, as well as educating parents with tidbits of Montessori information. **You are responsible for reviewing the bi-weekly newsletter and updating your family calendars accordingly.**

Facebook

Like us on Facebook! The all-school page is

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bloomington-MontessoriSchool/156703431035885>.

Your classroom also has a private FB group for parents, please email

headofschool@montessori.k12.in.us, and the Head of School will help you join your child's group.

Classroom Communication

Communication is a constant opportunity through which to model our values. It is also vital to have the needs of all stakeholders met. BMS understands that families are busy, and we will work hard to streamline information and respect parents' time. Also, we expect parents to respect the time of staff by reading communications and responding when appropriate.

Respect-Modeling respect is at the forefront of all communication. This includes active listening, peaceful conflict resolution tools, and an appreciation for the diversity of all kinds.

Classroom Communication-Classrooms communicate in a variety of ways. There are variations between classrooms based on teacher or need however, there is a general framework that you can expect to be demonstrated throughout the school:

- **Weekly communication:** Early Childhood students do not yet use weekly work plans and bring work home as they finish it or when they are done displaying it. You can expect to see some work, work records, and portfolios traveling home each week at the elementary levels. **Read your classroom's customs and welcome information for more details.**
- **Quarterly communication:** Lead Teachers send out a curricular update in your child's progress report each quarter. While many language and math lessons are individualized, this information will explain themes covered during the quarter, such as in the cultural areas. More individualized curriculum progress will be discussed at conferences (see below).

- Parent/Teacher conferences: Formal conferences occur once each semester. This is a format through which the teachers give detailed information about a student's progress through the curriculum.
- Parent Forums: Because we are not a system that gives grades and reduces child progress to a percentage or letter, parents must understand the larger context for the data that will be shared with them. Educating yourself about our school and philosophy is the best way to do this. Opportunities include:
 - Parent Orientation nights when you are entering a new classroom. These events explain the systems of communication specific to your classroom, customs to expect, etc. One will occur in the spring before your transition to help prepare you for what generally to expect and in the fall of your transition to give more practical and immediate information.
 - Parent Education Forums: At least two parent education forums are held annually on various topics. We usually offer a philosophical forum in the fall and an academic forum in the spring. Additional forums may be scheduled throughout the year as opportunities or interests arise.

We highly recommend you attend all Parent Forum opportunities to establish a strong partnership with the school and prepare yourself to offer your child the best possible support.

Parent/Teacher Conferences—Parent/Teacher Conferences occur in the fall and spring. Sign-up times and procedures are announced through the office, and you are responsible for signing up for a time that works best for your family. Conferences will be held via Zoom. Teachers will work hard to stay on time, ending and beginning conferences promptly, to honor parents' schedules.

As children are transitioning into our school during the beginning of the Early Childhood program, this is a casual team meeting in which teachers and parents share their observations regarding the child's development. This begins to be a more formal process in kindergarten through sixth grade. You will be sent a progress report before your conference time. It is very important to read this document in advance and come prepared with any questions or concerns you may have. Conferences are 15 minutes long, and each moment should be used effectively. All of a child's parents are encouraged to attend the conference, and the discussion should stay focused on the child.

As Concerns Arise—One of the benefits of a smaller school to which parents transport their children daily is the opportunity to discuss important issues with staff as they arise. Your teacher will usually be available daily for quick questions, notifications, or comments at drop-off and dismissal times. **Read your classroom's daily schedule.** More complex discussions can be emailed or brought up in person for scheduling a meeting around teacher and parent availability.

Parent Action Committee

BMS is fortunate to be supported by an active group of parent collaborators, the Parent Action Committee (PAC). Every parent at BMS can be a member of the PAC. The PAC organizes projects each year, including school-wide service projects and family events. Some typical events include:

- Teacher Appreciation Week--children are invited to bring small tokens of appreciation throughout the week. Donations are collected for staff gifts and a staff luncheon.
- Fall Festival--Each fall, the school comes together for a pitch-in/pot-luck meal, games, and crafts.
- Spring Fling--Each spring, the community comes together for a pitch-in/pot-luck meal and fun activities.
- A school-wide family service project in our greater community.
- Occasional parent night-out and whole family craft events

The newsletter and signs around campus provide information about the PAC monthly meetings. Participation in planning or staffing PAC events counts toward family volunteer hours.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Policy

A student's success at school is dependent upon regular and consistent attendance. At BMS, we embrace the concept of educating the whole child, particularly the idea that special times away with parents provide a unique bonding and learning essential to a child's development and well-being. We understand that field trips can enrich a child's education which is why we include them in our curriculum. This document should provide you with clarification about our school policies regarding attendance, absenteeism, and tardiness.

According to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Attendance Guidelines (October 7, 2014) and the Indiana Code (IC) 20-20-8-8, which was recently amended, habitual truancy was defined to include students absent ten (10) days or more from school within a school year without being excused or without being absent under a parental request filed with the school. Chronic absenteeism was defined as a student absent from school for ten percent (10 percent) or more of a school year for any reason.

Unlike public schools, private schools can set their own policies regarding how many reasonable days a student may miss during the academic year. BMS certainly takes individual situations into account, such as health issues, travel, etc., but in general, we agree with the current IDOE recommended ten (10) allowed days absent and ten percent (17 days) during an academic year when it comes to defining habitual and chronic situations. When a child is frequently out sick or arrives late consistently, a negative impact on the child's ability to stay current with lesson concepts and targeted areas of study occurs and impede academic progress.

BMS expects that as much as possible, trips will be planned to occur within the scheduled holiday dates, teacher work, and professional days as listed on the school calendar. If you schedule a trip or a day off other than during the posted breaks, a written note from the parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence should be submitted to the office. If your child is out sick, please call (812-336-2800) and notify the office the morning of the day the child is out. Parents need to understand that the school and Lead teachers cannot be held accountable for the quality of their child's educational experience when the child has excessive tardiness or absenteeism. If your child exceeds the acceptable amount of absenteeism, you will receive a formal letter stating that we are concerned about this area.

Illness (Non-COVID)

To protect the school community's health, a child who appears ill upon arrival will not be admitted to the school. Should a child become ill while at school, parents will be contacted to make arrangements for the immediate pick up (within 30 minutes) of the child. BMS will attempt to contact the parents first and then attempt to contact the emergency contacts listed on the Enrollment Agreement.

If your child tested negative for COVID and has a contagious illness or an illness that interferes with their ability to function at school, please keep him/her home **until the symptoms have resolved for 24 hours**. Symptoms include fever of 100 degrees, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, or significant behavioral changes. Again, if any combination of these symptoms is in evidence, please keep your child home for at least 24 hours after the symptoms have cleared.

A slight cold, runny nose or persistent cough is usually not reason enough for a child to miss school. While unclear nasal discharge indicates a possible infection within, the unclear discharge itself is usually not contagious to those around the child. Any child who is too ill to participate in indoor *and* outdoor activities should be kept home from school. If your child is well enough to come to school, we (BMS) will consider the child well enough to go outdoors to play. **Please call the school each day your child is ill, so we can track attendance and any patterns of illness within the classrooms.**

School Closings and Delays

BMS Winter Weather Policy

BMS will make its own decisions regarding delays and will take into consideration the Monroe County Community School Corporation's (MCCSC) decision regarding school delays and school closings under the following conditions:

- MCCSC is delaying or closing because their Scouters have determined the roads to be icy and hazardous in the morning or, in some cases, in the evening before school.
- MCCSC opts to delay or close for extremely cold conditions.
- MCCSC is delaying or closing for the second consecutive day.
- Other conditions that may arise in which MCCSC delays or closes.

The decision will be made by the Head of School. All BMA parents and staff will be notified of ANY school closing or delay through email no later than 6:30 am. Additional notifications will be placed on social media channels and the WFIU/WTIU website.

In the event of a delay, all classroom doors will open at 10:00 am. There will be a morning half-day preschool from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. BMS parents will be notified of the decision no later than 6:30 a.m. by email, the school's website homepage, FACTS Family Portal, social media channels, and WFIU/WTIU website.

Always make safe decisions whether to come to school based on road conditions in your neighborhood. Parents are free to opt-out at their discretion, and BMS will do our best to ensure any important learning goals of the day are not missed. (*Adopted February 2021*)

Calendar

Please familiarize yourself with the school calendar, which can be found on the website here: [2022-2023 School Year Calendar](#). Holidays with no school, Teacher Professional Development Days, school events such as parent forums and community celebrations, classroom events such as Children's Evenings and performances, and Parent/Teacher Conference Days will be marked. Updates are made to the calendar throughout the year, and notices are posted in the school newsletter.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Summary

Parents were asked to upload their child's health and vaccination records after completing their enrollment packet. If you could not upload this document at the time of enrollment, please submit it directly to the office by emailing officeassistant@montessori.k12.in.us. This form communicates to staff any medical information they should know of and ensures treatment of your child by a physician or a hospital should the school not be able to reach you in an emergency. If your child has any allergies or other serious medical problems, please return additional related forms, completed and signed by your child's doctor, before the first day of school.

Injuries

Minor accidents occurring during the school day, for example, cuts and scratches, receive prompt attention from the BMS staff. In a serious accident, every attempt will be made to immediately contact the family or the backup person specified on the emergency medical form so that arrangements may be made for the child to be taken home, to a physician, or the hospital. If necessary, a teacher will accompany the child in an ambulance.

Medications

Children may be administered prescription and non-prescription drugs only authorized by their physician and only after the school has received the completed permission forms (available in the office). The parent must personally deliver all medicine and instructions to the appropriate staff member in the original, pre-packaged, or pharmacy-labeled container.

Security Protocol

Door buzzers/cameras

Main and Annex Buildings entrance doors will remain locked when school is in session.

Parents/guardians coming to school to pick up or drop off their child/children outside of the arrival and dismissal windows MUST come to the main entrance and ring the bell. Parent/guardians will remain in the office while an office staff member will retrieve the child or children from the classroom/s. NOTE: Please allow extra time for this additional step in security. Additional time can be saved if the parents/guardians inform the classroom teacher at drop-off of the plans for an early pick-up that day.

BMS policy requires that an Early Childhood student may leave the building only when accompanied by an adult. Please exit the building with your child; do not let them run ahead. No Early Childhood students should leave the building at any time unless supervised by their parents or another adult specifically designated by the parents. Teachers will not release children into the care of any other person without express instructions from the parents. Children dismissed from the classroom at the end of the school day must be carefully supervised to ensure their proper respect for the safety of themselves, others, and property in the commons and the parking lot.

If an intoxicated or impaired person arrives to pick up a child from school, the lead teacher or Head of School will suggest that another person be called to transport the child. If the intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing the child from the school, a staff member will immediately report the incident to the local police.

The driveway for the school is one-way. Please enter the parking lot from the north and exit from the south.

PARENTS: Please inform the school of any changes in your home and/or work telephone number(s) and cell phone numbers. Also, if there is a change in telephone numbers for your backup persons, please inform the school.

Fire/Evacuation

Fire drills are held monthly throughout the school year. Children are educated thoroughly about the appropriate procedures in case of a fire.

In the event of a fire or other Emergency: Fire Alarms in the building will be activated, and the Head of School shall be responsible for contacting 911 Emergency services to dispatch the appropriate Emergency Personnel and ensuring that all staff learns of the emergency imminent evacuation. Teachers shall instruct the children in their classroom to calmly line up at the exterior exit of their classroom, and evacuation can proceed. Once outside and at their classroom-specific designated meeting place, one teacher will do a roll call to ensure that each child is accounted for and safely out of the building.

BMS's Emergency Action Plan is reviewed annually by the Head of School and local law enforcement to ensure the school is current on best practices.

Sun and Insect Exposure

Please apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent at home before school. If your child will need reapplication, please send non-aerosol sunscreen and/or insect repellent with your child and inform the teacher of his/her requirements. Please label the sunscreen with your child's name.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The Montessori Method of education stresses the child's internal discipline development. The atmosphere in the Montessori environment is one of order and respect for people and things. Children become involved in the activities, and there is seldom a need for external discipline from the adults. The Montessori classroom is a small society that encourages self-control and responsibility for one's own actions. The one all-inclusive ground rule is that everyone is free as long as they respect the people and things in the class.

If children are behaving in a way, which may be harmful to themselves or to others, our policy is:

- The nearest adult removes the child from the situation and stays with the child until he or she regains control.
- The child then returns to the group with the adult and stays with the adult until the child engages in an activity.
- The adult then stays nearby to ensure the behavior does not reoccur.
- If there are injured parties, another adult attends to their needs.
- Incident/accident reports (when necessary) will be completed and signed by a parent/guardian, teacher, and administrator.
- Students may be brought to the office if the classroom teachers cannot help the child(ren) reset.

Firm, positive statements about helpful behavior are used as reinforcement. Negative behavior is redirected. The older children are encouraged to solve their own interpersonal conflicts as long as there is no danger of physical harm. If a child consistently behaves in a way that is disruptive to the group, a specific plan of logical consequences will be developed and discussed with the parents and staff.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dress Code

BMS Elementary School's dress code supports a peaceful, learning-centered environment. Thus, clothing typically worn at the beach or for loungewear is not appropriate at school, nor is clothing promoting commercial media images, violence, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual innuendo, profanity, obscenity, etc., or gangs. Beyond this,

clothing should be comfortable and suited to the season and cover areas of the body commonly known as “private,” including the midriff. Undergarments may not be exposed nor worn as outerwear.

Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for outside play during winter. Hats, mittens, scarves, and boots are required when the weather dictates. If a child does not come to school with appropriate clothing, that child will not be allowed to play outside. Please label all outerwear with your child’s name; we finish yearly with many unclaimed pieces. Below is our recess clothing policy based on temperature and weather conditions:

Degrees(F) Clothing Requirements

60’s and above Short sleeves are fine

50’s Long Sleeves

40’s Jacket or sweater

30’s Coat

20’s and below Coat, hat, gloves, or mittens

Standardized Testing

Our once-yearly standardized testing affords third through sixth-grade students the practice of taking tests, something Montessori children do not do often. It allows parents to get standardized feedback on their students’ performance and the data they need for public school placement upon graduation. As BMS students do not experience the pressure of a testing culture and are educated to be critical thinkers, they generally do very well on the test. If you do not want your child to participate in standardized testing, please contact our assistant head of school at assistanthos@montessori.k12.in.us.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for providing transportation for their children. The school furnishes a roster of names, phone numbers, and addresses within the parent directory in the FACTS Family Portal to help parents make carpool arrangements. If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, they must be on your pick-up list on file with the office to be released. Unfamiliar adults will be asked to check in with their child’s teacher or at the main office to show ID before picking up the child. It is helpful for you to prepare unfamiliar adults for this before they arrive. For more information, please see the section on security.

Students in every program take field trips. We will walk for those a short distance away, such as the Community Orchard. For others, we may take city buses or ask parent volunteers or teachers to drive.

Elementary children with parent permission to travel to or from school without an adult must have a written and signed directive on file, including days, times, and destinations the release should cover.

Social Media

Bloomington Montessori School recognizes that the Internet and related technology can enhance learning if such technology is appropriately accessed. Although BMS does not support the use of social media within our student population, we recognize that it is a form of communication used outside of school by our students. The school prohibits bullying through the use of data or computer software accessed through any computer, computer system, or computer network. Students using social media to bully or harass other students are subject to the Bullying Policy and disciplinary procedures. Students should alert teachers or staff members if they see threatening, inappropriate, or harmful content online (including messages, posts, and images).