

Parent Handbook

Our Belief

Every student is able to learn and should have equal opportunities to reach their full potential. Parents and communities should share responsibilities to prepare our children for success in school as well as in their future careers and lives.

Our Mission

To empower students to become critical thinkers, independent learners and promote a growth mindset. We value these qualities as a necessity for academic achievement and social contribution. We commit to nurture children to care for the natural environment and promote peaceful social education for the betterment of humanity.

Our Commitment

MOLO is dedicated to upholding the standards of Maria Montessori and the American Montessori Society (AMS). As such, we only hire Montessori certified lead teachers at every age level. We strive to find Teacher Assistants who are experienced and dedicated to the Montessori philosophy. Our staff members commit to being lifelong learners through continuous professional development to ensure best practice in our daily teaching and care for children. We will set examples in the behavior of courtesy, care for others, and developing a mindset to reduce the amount of waste in our daily living and a habit of recycling.

School Policies & Expectations

Thank you for choosing **MOLO Bilingual Montessori School**. We are licensed with the Texas Health and Human Services and adhere to all standards set by the state. We also strive to uphold the standards set by the American Montessori Society and follow the teachings of Maria Montessori in order to meet the needs of all our students.

Parental involvement is especially important in the development of your child. You are welcome to volunteer or visit **MOLO** at any time during operational hours. Please contact us by email or phone to express your interests and any concerns you may have. The school director is available for in-person appointments during regular daily hours of operation or by phone and email. We are partners with you in the development of your child and offer parent education classes on a regular basis.

Prior to your child being admitted, you **must provide all the information and documents required for admission as set by the state of Texas**. These include immunization records and a doctor's statement attesting to a physical exam having been given within the past year and approving of your child's participation in a daycare program. Parents are responsible for notifying the center of any changes to the child health records. Your child's admission records should be verified and updated each year.

Hours/Days of Operation: We are open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The center will close promptly at 6:30 p.m. Parents who are late picking up their child will be charged **\$1.00** for each minute after 6:30 p.m. The late-pick up surcharge payment will be due upon the parent's arrival. If you know that you will be late, please call so we can reassure your child that you will be arriving soon. If your

child is a school day only student, they will be dismissed at 3:30. You may wait out front of the school or in your car at carpool and your child will be brought out at 3:30. If you are late for 3:30 pickup your child will be asked to sit quietly in the front office until you arrive. **The Infant classroom is open from 8:00-5:30 only. We only allow four infants to be enrolled in extended care at once. You must confirm before enrolling if you are interested in extended care to ensure there is space.**

Open House Policy: Parents are welcome to visit the center anytime during our hours of operation. No prior notice is required by the school. Parents may also make an appointment to observe their child's engagement in learning activities in the classroom. Finally, parents are welcome to participate in volunteer activities as requested by the school, and to join in school-wide activities as appropriate. Observations and volunteering should not be done within the first 6 weeks of your child starting school in order to allow for normalization into the classroom.

Payment: Payment in full is due on the first Monday of each month. Late payments will incur a \$25.00 late charge. Failure to pay by Friday of the same week will result in the suspension of childcare services for the following week. On-time payment is required even when a child is sick. A \$25.00 fee will be charged for each returned check. Please see the payment schedule on the accompanying "Program Operations and Rates" sheet for more details.

Application Fee: An initial nonrefundable application fee of \$100 is required to hold your child's spot for a future space. **This fee does not guarantee enrollment at MOLO or at the time you want**, but when a space becomes available. If you put down the fee and you do not take the space that is offered when it becomes available, we will not hold the spot for you as we have waitlists at every age level. You will be placed back on the waiting list.

Re-Registration Fee: Each year, a \$100 nonrefundable re-registration fee will be charged. This is offered in spring of the year before to current families in order to hold their space for the coming school year.

Supply Fee: An annual nonrefundable supply fee of \$150 will be charged in the Fall and Spring semesters and \$100 for the Summer. This fee is applied towards the purchasing of new nap cots, toys, learning materials and art supplies.

Vacation: Monthly tuition is due each month whether your child is in attendance or not. **In the summer we allow families to take 2 weeks off without paying.** This is an excellent time to take a family vacation without paying tuition for up to two weeks. You may take these two weeks together or separately. During the academic school year tuition is due in full each month regardless of attendance.

Holiday Schedule: MOLO will be closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Eve & New Year's Day
We are closed the Thursday & Friday of AMS Conference in March
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Fourth of July
Labor Day
Monday-Wednesday of Thanksgiving week is Childcare Only
Thursday - Friday of Thanksgiving Week

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

If any of these holidays fall on a weekend, the center will either close the Friday before or the following Monday. We follow the schedule of most banks and businesses. There is no discount for holidays as we pay our teachers for holidays.

Child Care Only days include Thanksgiving week. Child Care only days are for All Day students only. Students who attend just the academic school day of 8:30-3:30 do not qualify for these days. If you would like your child to attend during a Child Care Only week the fee is \$35/day.

Closed: Occasionally the school will be closed for staff training or parent teacher conferences. These are usually once per semester and two days before the start of a new academic school year. It is important we maintain the standards set forth by the state of Texas which means we must do staff trainings each year. It also gives teachers the chance to deep clean and prepare their classrooms. We are closed the Thursday and Friday of the American Montessori Society National Conference in order to allow as many lead teachers as possible to go to the conference.

Enrollment Procedures: The following documents must be submitted for a child's application to be considered complete:

- ✎ Completed Enrollment Application form
- ✎ Completed Statement of Health from Physician
- ✎ Current Immunization Record (visit www.ImmunizeTexas.com)
- ✎ MOLO does not accept exemptions and all children must be vaccinated
- ✎ A Signed General Policy Statement
- ✎ A Signed Discipline and Guidance Statement
- ✎ A Non-Refundable Registration Fee of \$100.00
- ✎ Sign Form-2550 (Infants only)

Parents are responsible for updating any information such as change of address, phone number or email, child's health status and vaccination records.

New students must have a "Playdate" prior to starting school. This is a time for children to meet their teachers and gain comfort in the environment. This will be at 9:30 on the day preceding enrollment. If a child's first day is a Monday, the playdate will be the Friday before.

New students under the age of 3 will have a transition into the classroom by following a gentle integration schedule. The schedule will be:

- Day 1- 9:00-10:00
- Day 2- 9:00-11:00
- Day 3- 8:45-12:15
- Day 4- 8:30- 2:45
- Day 5- 8:30- 3:30

Multi-Age Classrooms

Montessori requires that students be arranged by brain development level and may look different to typical schools you have seen before. Maria Montessori carefully studied pediatric brain development and found the different plains fell not at a certain time, but within a certain time. Classrooms are arranged as follows:
Infant/Toddler: 9-18 months

Toddler: 18 months- 3 years
Early Childhood (Primary): 3-6 years
Lower Elementary: 6-9 years
Upper Elementary: 9-12 years

This does not mean that all children will be ready for the same things at the same times, it means they are ready within the time frame. Occasionally children may be ready to move, or not, based on development, not on age.

Toddler classrooms Requirements: In the Toddler classrooms a children are between 18-36 months. Occasionally a child may not be ready to move up to Primary after turning three years old. No child may exceed the age of 3 years and 4 months. It is dangerous to have children older than this in the same classroom as the youngest children. If your child is 3.4 they will be moved to a Primary room.

Children who are moving up to a Primary classroom must be potty trained. *No diapers or pull ups are allowed in Primary classrooms.* A child who has two accidents in a day or accidents 3 consecutive days will need to stay home for a day to work with parents on training. The Primary classrooms focus on independence and large-scale learning. Teachers are there to facilitate this learning and not to change diapers or clothing.

Parent Information Board: The parent information board is located near the front entrance. There, parents will find classroom schedules, menus for morning and afternoon snacks and menus for breakfast and lunch. It also displays notices for all upcoming events and other important information.

Drop off: The academic school day begins at 8:30 and ends at 3:30. Our gate will be open from 8:00-9:00 each morning. Please plan on arriving during that time. The gate will be closed at 9:00 and students who are not present at that time will be considered tardy. A tardy is considered unexcused when not accompanied by a doctor's note. A late fee of **\$5** per child is applied each child a student is late. Three unexcused tardies are considered as one absence for school age students.

The speed limit in our parking lot is 5mph. Please adhere to this for the safety of all. We do not cut through the handicap walkway between the parking spaces. Drop off line in front of the door is for parents who are dropping off quickly. If you are parked in this line you are not permitted into the building.

Attendance: Attendance is important for the routine and stability of a child. In Primary and up, students who miss school, or are tardy, are losing out on important lessons which are building blocks for subsequent lessons. Recess is at 8:30 and **the daily lesson in Primary is at 9:00.** If your child comes after that time they will miss important learning opportunities. *Elementary students* must meet the standards of attendance set by the state of Texas.

Elementary begins at 8:15. An elementary age student may not miss more than 9 days of school per semester, or they are subject to retention in their current grade. Three unexcused tardies equal one absence.

Release of Children: Children will only be released to parents and to other authorized persons whose names are listed on the enrollment form. Written authorization from the parent is required for any person picking up a child. As our policy requires a photo ID, parent must inform those whom they have authorized to pick up their child of this requirement. **We will not release children without verification of authorization.** The gate will be open for dismissal from 3:00-3:45. Parents arriving after this time are late picking up and will need to pay the late fee.

Illness and Medication: For the welfare of all students and staff, we will not admit any child who:

- ♦ is vomiting or who has diarrhea (If your child has 3 bowel movements with loose stools within a day, he/she will be sent home.)
- ♦ has a temperature of 100 F or higher
- ♦ has an undiagnosed rash
- ♦ has undiagnosed discharge from the eye
- ♦ has lice or lice eggs in their hair
- ♦ clearly communicable disease such as Chicken Pox, Hand Foot & Mouth, etc.

As our staff greets children upon their arrival, we check temperatures, and check for bruises, scratches, and other signs and symptoms of illness or injury. As necessary, we inform the parents of what we have found and may ask parents for further information as to the possible causes of the signs or symptoms.

For children who develop any of the conditions listed above while they are in our care, their parents will be asked to pick them up immediately. Parents will be charged \$25 per hour if their ill child has not been picked up within one hour of notification. This policy is strictly and equally applied to all children for the safety of all of students and staff so that everyone is protected from the spread of contagions. Children may return to the school after having been symptom free for 24 hours **WITHOUT** the aid of medication. Should a child come into contact with either someone who is showing signs or symptoms of a contagious condition or has come into contact with someone who has been exposed to a contagious condition, the child's parent is required to notify the center immediately so that other parents can be alerted to the possibility of their children's exposure.

The Health and Human Services Commission regulations are very strict regarding the use of medicine. We will only give prescription medication, and only if it is labeled with the child's name, dosage, time, and the date prescribed by a state licensed medical practitioner. If it is a prescription that is to be taken 3 times a day, **we will only administer the mid-day dose**. The parent should administer morning and evening doses at home. If it is a prescription that is given twice a day, the parent should give both doses at home. We will not administer medication that is left over from previous illnesses. Parents will have to complete and sign a medication log. **We will not give any over-the-counter medications**. Parents may administer these before their child arrives in the morning. We must have a doctor's note in order to administer medication to children.

Emergency Evacuation Plan and Severe Weather: In the event of an emergency such as a fire, we will evacuate the building and relocate to **West Houston Christian Center**, located at 11300 Wilcrest Green Dr. Parents will be notified immediately via the REMIND app that they should pick up their children as soon as possible.

In the event of the threat of a natural disaster, such as a tornado, caregivers will keep children in a designated safe zone until everything is all clear.

In the event of a human-caused emergency, such as the threat of an intruder entering the building, we will undergo a lock-down. In such an event, parents will be notified by REMIND app regarding when the lock-down starts and ends. We will keep all doors locked at all times to ensure that no intruders may enter the building.

Please see our Emergency Preparation Plan poster located on the parent information board.

We will follow the **Alief ISD** weather schedule. **If Alief ISD closes for inclement weather, MOLO will also close.** In the event of a power outage during the night, and if power is not restored by 6:30 a.m., parents will be notified via Remind by 7:00 a.m. that the school will be closed for the day. In the event of a power outage during hours of operation, if power is not restored within 2 hours, per the state of Texas, the center will notify parents that they must come pick up their children. If water service is disrupted, per the state of Texas, we will notify parents to pick up their children.

If rainy weather conditions become increasingly severe and are officially declared to be a tropical storm or a hurricane, the center will notify parents that the school is closing, and that children should be picked up immediately.

Medical Emergencies: Accidents and injuries can happen anywhere at any time. Rest assured that MOLO staff is trained in applying first aid and CPR. If a child is seriously injured, staff will attempt to notify the parent(s) by phone, and to inform them of the nature of the injury and how it was treated. Staff may wash cuts and scrapes with water only unless the parent gives written permission for staff to use a cleanser. Center staff may not remove any foreign objects from the body. Please keep in mind that children sometimes fall, bump, or scrape themselves without crying or reporting the injury to a staff member. Parents who discover an injury or a wound, which they do not recall seeing before, should report this to the center so that that we may attempt to determine the cause. If a serious injury occurs at the center, 911 will be called.

Animals: We have a fish tank in the front desk area of the school. Classrooms may have pets in their classroom. Animals are excellent ways to observe the natural world and living things. Pets contribute to a sense of community and responsibility in the classroom.

Field Trip: Elementary takes one field trip each month and it is usually the last Friday of the month. This is a half day for all Elementary students. In house “field trips” are occasionally arranged for students. If any field trip is to take place off campus, permission slips will go home for signature. On weekends we may have Family Field Trips. Families are encouraged to participate but are not required. Parents are solely responsible for their own children on these trips.

Transportation: We do not provide any transportation.

Meals: Breakfast, morning snack, lunch (provided by a third party) and afternoon snack will be served daily. It is the parents’ responsibility to check the weekly calendar to make sure that the scheduled lunch and snacks are appropriate for and acceptable to their children. Parents are welcome to send meals and snacks with their children. Parents acknowledge and understand that the center is not responsible for the nutritional value of meals and snacks supplied by parents for their children. If the meals and snacks provided by the center do not meet parents’ expectations or a child’s needs, then parents will be required to provide them.

Breakfast will be served from 7:15 to 8:15 a.m. Parents who would like their children to have breakfast at the center must make sure that they arrive before 8:00. Morning snacks will be served between 9:30 a.m. and 10:45, lunch will be served 11:45 a.m. or noon, and afternoon snacks will be served at 3:00 p.m. If your child has any food allergies, it is important that you let us know by asking the child’s doctor to fill

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out the Allergy Emergency Plan. The center's meal and snack selections are guided by the Nutrition and Food Service chart.

Clothing: We encourage children to dress comfortably and appropriately for the weather. We go outside morning and afternoon as the weather permits. To encourage development of independent bathroom skills, children's clothing should be easy for them to manipulate with minimal assistance. Items such as overalls and clothing with a lot of snaps make it difficult for children to independently use the restroom. All children should always have a clean change of clothes available in their cubbies. **Please make sure that your child wears closed toe shoes every day.**

Uniform: one uniform shirt is provided per child. If you would like to purchase more uniforms you may do so from the school for \$22 or at frenchtoast.com.

Toilet Training: With cooperation from parents, we will help potty train children in toddler classes. When parents and staff agree that the child is ready for potty training, we will discuss the methods that should be consistently implemented both at home and at the center. Children being potty-trained must have 2 consecutive weeks with no accidents in order to make the change from pull-ups or diapers to regular underwear. Communication between the teacher and parent is very important during this time.

Water Activities: During the summer, children 18 months and up are allowed to participate in water activities. There will be no standing pools of water - only sprinkler play and slip and slides. On "water days" (as indicated on the weekly schedule during the summer from June to August), children should come dressed in swimwear and with sunscreen already applied and a bag of dry clothing.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent: Parents/Guardians must sign a permission slip for their children to have sunscreen and/or insect repellent applied at school. The sunscreen and insect repellent must be safe for the age of the child, still be in its original container, be within the expiration date noted on the product container and **in the form of a spray or stick**. Both must be able to be applied without the staff's hand touching the child. Prior to use at school, sunscreen and repellent should be applied to the child at least once at home to test for any allergic reaction. Sunscreen should be applied at home before coming to school in the mornings. This permission slip must be signed annually.

Sunscreen will not be used on infants under 6 months of age unless accompanied by a doctor's note. Sunscreen should be applied only to exposed areas of skin and applied at least 20 to 30 minutes before going outdoors so that it will be able to be absorbed into the skin for increased effectiveness. Sunscreen should be re-applied every two hours while outdoors, or more often if the child is involved in water play, or if the child is perspiring significantly.

Insect repellent will not be used on an infant under 6 months of age. Insect repellent should be used only if it is safe for the age of the child and when recommended by public health authorities, or when requested by a parent/guardian. The repellent should contain a concentration of not more than 30% DEET. Oil of lemon and eucalyptus products may not be used on children under the age of 3 years. Insect repellent should be applied to a child's skin only once per day but may be sprayed on clothing when going outside the second time. Sprayed clothing will be returned home at the end of the day for laundering. Exposed skin should be washed off with soap and water after a child returns indoors.

Infant Care Requirements: According to HHSC requirements, a daily feeding schedule must be provided to the center by the parents. This must be updated by the parents every 30 days until the child is

eating table food. All daily information will be recorded throughout the day through the app. The daily report will include all feedings (time and amount), naps, and diaper changes. Parents should place name labels on all of the child's personal items (e.g. formula, bottles, blankets and baby food). Infants should be given their morning bottle before they arrive at the center. As the center follows a Safe Sleep Policy, parents are required to read, sign and return, the attached Form 2550.

Mothers who are breastfeeding may visit at any time to feed her child. An adult size chair is available in the conference room for feeding. Labeled, bottled breast milk may be brought to the center and a staff member will offer it to the infant.

Immunizations: Children enrolled in the school **must meet and continue to meet applicable immunization requirements** specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Children's immunization record is required upon enrollment. Children's immunization records must be updated each time they receive shots. Parent should ask their doctor for two copies so that the school may keep one on file. Parents whose children's immunizations are not current are required to either obtain a temporary waiver from the state or make sure that the children get their immunizations immediately. Failure to do so will result in suspension of services for any child whose immunizations and record are not current. The recommended vaccine schedule is available at www.ImmunizeTexas.com. Staff members are not required to have immunizations. However, if a communicable disease poses a threat, then we will request teachers to get, for example, their flu shots. Tuberculin (TB) testing is not required for either children or teachers, but it is recommended.

Hearing and Vision Screening: The Special Senses and Communications Disorders Act require that all children over age 4 enrolled in HHSC licensed daycare, and those that are not yet in a public school, have a vision and hearing screening report. Parents should provide the center with a copy of their children's report following their annual check-up.

Discipline: Discipline will be:

- 1) individual and consistent for each child;
- 2) appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- 3) directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-regulation.

Caregivers will only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-regulation, and self-direction. There will be no harsh, cruel, or demeaning treatment of any child. Natural consequences are a part of the Montessori Method.

Toys: Please leave all toys at home. We will not be responsible for lost or broken toys. Electronics are not permitted at school.

Suspension & Expulsion: We work hard with parents to come up with solutions to behaviors that might arise with a student. When the teacher or director comes to you with a behavioral issue it is expected that they work together to help the child overcome the challenges they are facing. Children who engage in violent or aggressive behavior which might endanger other children or staff members, or which disrupts the class to the point that prevents other children from learning, or for any other reason that the center deems extremely serious, may be suspended, or even expelled from the school.

Parent Conferences: Conferences are available upon request of the parent. You may call to schedule an appointment to learn about your child's progress, problems/concerns, or for any other reasons. You may be asked to come in for a conference if we feel one is needed. It is our goal to hold parent conferences once a semester for all students to discuss their academic and developmental progress.

Parent Workshops: Educational workshops for parents will be offered throughout the year. Attendance is not mandatory but highly recommended as we want to be partners with you in your child's success. This wide range of topics help parents better understand a child's developmental stages and how to work with their children and school. These workshops are offered free of charge to MOLO families. Outside families may attend for a small fee.

Non-School Day Fun: MOLO offers some chances for fun outside of school hours including Family Field Trips, Mid-Autumn Festival, Fall Festival, International Day, Parent's Day, End of Year Show and other celebrations. These are family events and MOLO is not responsible for children during family events if parents are present. It is the sole responsibility of parents to keep up with, and ensure the safety of their own children during such activities.

Parent's Night Out: Children participating in PNO are guaranteed a background checked, trained employee of the school with them the entire night. Because this is not during school hours, MOLO is not responsible for injuries during PNO.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO): MOLO has a PTO that meets monthly. Parents are welcome to join the PTO at any time. A parent representative should reach out to all new families, or an inquiry can be made at the front office.

Gang-Free Zone: Gang related criminal activity and engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of a childcare center is in violation of the law and is therefore subject to increased penalties under state law.

Policy update: Policies are subject to change. If there is a change in policy, you will be notified in writing.

Abuse and Neglect: Our Staff is trained yearly to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. Warning signs may include unexplained bruising, young children reporting that they are left alone, poor hygiene, showing aggression, acting out sexually or showing interest in sex that is not appropriate for their age. If any of our staff member suspects that a child has been abused or is being neglected, we are required by law to report what we have seen, heard, or observed. This is for the safety and well-being of all the children in our care. Parents may learn more, and may receive free trainings, through the Department of Family and Protective Services website. DFPS child abuse hotline information is located on a poster in the entry way. The DFPS phone number is

1-800-252-5400. Or you may visit DFPS online at: www.txabusehotline.org

You can view the policies and standards of Texas Health and Human Services by visiting hhs.texas.gov. Our facility is inspected on a regular basis and reports may be accessed through the website. If you would like to contact Childcare Licensing, you may do so by calling (713) 287-3239. The address is 1330 E 40th St, Houston, TX 77022

I have read and understand the policies laid forth in the Parent Handbook by MOLO Bilingual Montessori School. I respect the policies and guidelines and will hold myself and family to them.

Parent signature

date

Parent signature

date

Child's name