



## ELEMENTARY PARENT HANDBOOK

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Head of School, the Principals, teachers, and the administrators of Central Montessori Schools (CMS) extend a warm welcome to all students, whether returning or new students in the elementary classrooms. In order to ensure that students have a happy, stimulating, and successful school year, we have prepared this document, which outlines the school's policies, and some information regarding a few things that will help guide you through various procedures. We ask that you read this document carefully and refer back to it for future reference.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

CMS welcomes all children & employees regardless of country of origin, race, or religion. We are committed to providing an educational environment that is free of unlawful harassment and discrimination. CMS will not tolerate actions, comments, words, or jokes based on an individual's sex, race, age, religion, or any other legally protected grounds. Any person who becomes aware of possible harassment should promptly advise the Head of School, Principal, Supervisor, or Administrator who will handle the matter quickly and confidentially.

## **GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### **1. SCHOOL HOURS**

Drop-off time	<b>7:30 am – 9:00 am</b>
Program Hours	<b>9:00 am – 3:30 pm</b>
Afterschool/Homework	<b>3:30 pm – 5:00 pm</b>
Extended Hours	<b>5:00 pm – 6:00 pm</b> <i>(additional fee is required)</i>

### **2. ITEMS REQUIRED UPON ACCEPTANCE**

To complete the registration process, the following must be received by CMS:

- A completed Application Form;
- Letter of Acceptance & Terms of Registration;
- An up-to-date copy of the Public Health Immunization Record;
- The student's original birth certificate (clearly showing parent names) or other legal guardianship documents. The school will copy the original documents and return the original to you;
- Parents are required to complete a Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) form for payment. All charges will be processed using the information provided on this form, and there is no need to provide cheques.
- A non-refundable, one-time registration fee of \$1,000.
- A non-refundable deposit equivalent to one month's tuition, dated the day your application is received. This deposit will be applied as a pre-payment for the June tuition fee.
- Monthly tuition payments will be automatically debited from your account using the PAD form.

### **3. RETURNED PAYMENTS AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

#### **Returned Payments**

Parents will be charged an additional \$60.00 fee for any returned payments (NSF). If a replacement payment is not received within seven business days from the date of notice, you will be asked to temporarily withdraw your child from school until full payment is made. If more than two payments are returned, tuition must be paid by certified cheque, bank draft, money order, or cash.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

Sixty days' written notice is required in the event of a child's withdrawal from school. Prior to the withdrawal date, a "Written Notice of Withdrawal" form must be completed. This form is available at the office. Alternatively, parents may write a note, clearly stating the date and nature of their reason for withdrawal.

Tuition will be due for the sixty days following receipt of the Notice of Withdrawal even if the student is no longer attending school. If the sixty days written notice is not received, full program fees will be charged.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. School fees are based on registration for a full year and any temporary withdrawal does not necessitate a refund. The deposit received with your application is applied to **June tuition only** and is non-refundable.

**CMS reserves the right to terminate services if policies are not followed or fees are not paid in a timely manner.**

## **4. EXCLUSION POLICY**

CMS reserves the right to exclude any student from attendance, temporarily or permanently, who is deemed by the Head of School to be interfering with the health, safety, or educational development of him/herself or any other student in the program. CMS may ask/help find an alternate school for the student if the staff and administrators feel they cannot adequately meet their needs. This may also apply if CMS finds that parents/guardians are not cooperating/on board with the school's efforts to provide for the student's needs.

## **5. DEFINITION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**

During the December **Winter Break** and the March **Spring Break**, the school is closed, however, CMS offers **care** for parents interested in this service for an additional charge.

Our programs for **July & August** offer specialized 2-week session programs which include Art, Coding/Robotics, STEAM, Drama, Dance, Chess, Taekwondo, and a variety of Team Sports. More information including dates and fees are available in February/March.

*\*Statutory Holidays (CMS will be closed and no childcare will be available for children):*

<i>New Year's Day</i>	<i>Canada Day</i>
<i>Family Day</i>	<i>Civic Holiday (first Monday in August)</i>
<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>Thanksgiving Day</i>
<i>Easter Monday</i>	<i>Christmas Day</i>
<i>Victoria Day</i>	<i>Boxing Day</i>

## **6. DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### **NO SMOKING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Under the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017*, smoking, holding lit tobacco, the use of electronic cigarettes, and vaping are prohibited within 20 metres (65 feet) of the perimeter of school grounds (the building, the playground, or on the grounds of the school). This rule is designed to protect students and staff from secondhand smoke exposure.

The main door of the school will be open from 7:30 a.m. for drop-off. We will have the *Drop and Go* procedure for elementary students from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. at Door B.

If you wish to pick up your child any time before 4:30 p.m., kindly go to their classroom for pick-up. After 4:30 p.m., you may pick up your child from playground D. On rainy days or excessively cold weather, students can be retrieved from room 305 after 4:30 p.m.

Students enrolled in the extended-hour program will stay in the playground until 5:30 p.m. if weather conditions allow. Following that, they will transition to room 104 at 5:30 p.m.

***Note: Please ensure that your child says goodbye to the staff on duty. This ensures the safe departure of students.***

Individuals unfamiliar to school staff who are picking up students must present identification to confirm they are on the authorized pick-up list before the child will be released to them.

## **7. LATE ARRIVALS**

For a smooth start to the day, we suggest that students arrive by 8:50 a.m. This gives them enough time to plan their work and have their agendas signed by their teacher before class begins at 9:00 a.m. Specialist classes also begin at 9 a.m., and the specialist teachers will collect students just before that to ensure that the program begins on time.

*Should you arrive late to the classroom (after 9:05 a.m.), please bring your child to the office to obtain a late slip before they can enter the classroom.*

## **8. AFTERSCHOOL (3:30- 5:00 P.M.)**

Homework will be assigned to students starting in late September. Grade one students will need about 15 minutes for homework, whereas a grade three student might need half an hour. Homework time will start at 3:30 p.m. and for those being picked up at 3:30, it will be sent home. For students picked up after this time, homework will only be sent home if it was not completed during school time.

## **9. PICK UP**

During pick-up, please ensure that your child says goodbye (including the handshake) to the staff on duty. This ensures the safe departure of students. If you pick up and your child still wishes to play, please sign your child out and take them to a playground (monkey bars) that is not under the supervising staff's care. When parents arrive, it may be unclear who is looking after the students and which rules they should adhere to. This goes for the gym as well. Please pick up your child and leave the gym. Our supervision is based on the students being picked up during this time and the numbers reducing. If your child continues to stay, we will consider them part of the after-school program. Supervision for the safety of the students is our priority. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

## **10. EXTENDED HOURS AND LATE PICK-UP FEE**

Parents picking up their child after the program ends are subject to a monthly Extended Care Fee which is a flat monthly fee for extended hours (5-6 p.m.).

CMS extended hours end at 6:00 p.m. at which time the school is closed. After this time, a charge of \$2.00 per minute applies and is payable directly to the staff member on duty that evening. Payment should be made no later than the next school day. We understand that you may be late due to poor weather conditions, such as a severe winter storm. On those days the charge will be waived.

## **11. ABSENCES**

If students will be absent for the day, please phone the elementary office (extension 3) and leave a detailed message. If the student is sick, please let us know what symptoms they display.

## **12. INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of inclement weather requiring school closure, CMS will notify families through *Transparent Classroom* by 7:30 a.m. If the school remains open and heavy snowfall is forecasted to impact commute times, we encourage all families to plan for longer-than-usual travel times for pickup.

## **13. COMMUNICATION**

*Transparent Classroom* is our primary communication system with parents. Teachers will also use this platform to share updates, reminders, and photos from the classroom.

Parents are welcome to email their child's teacher, and we kindly request allowing 24 hours for a response. For urgent matters, please contact the office to relay your message.

If you would like to discuss your child's development or behaviour, please reach out to the teacher or the office to schedule an appointment. We are committed to ensuring that all students receive the best possible education and look forward to collaborating with you.

**Important:** Please ensure to update your child's information on *Transparent Classroom*. Updated contact numbers, authorized pick-up individuals, allergies, and other relevant information are essential.

#### **14. SCHOOL OFFICE**

You are encouraged to contact the school office at any time with messages relating to your child's school day or if you have any questions relating to school registration, tuition, or special programs. The telephone numbers of all campuses are listed on our website.

#### **15. AGENDAS**

Elementary students will receive a school agenda for the year. The agendas are meant to be a way of communicating with parents. Please leave any notes stapled in the book, or write messages directly in the book for teachers. Part of your child's responsibility is to show the teacher a message from the parent, and the parent's responsibility is to check the agenda nightly.

#### **16. UNIFORMS**

The school's elementary uniform provider is *InSchoolwear*. Parents can shop both online and in store. Elementary students are required to wear their full-dress uniform on Mondays and Fridays and their gym uniform on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

#### **17. FOOTWEAR**

Students should have a pair of running shoes for their gym days. We ask that running shoes be without flashing lights, etc. Dress shoes for uniform days may be kept in their lockers so they wear their outdoor runners to school to allow for an outdoor gym or recess time. Dress shoes should be black, may be soft-soled black shoes used for only dress uniform days.

#### **18. TEAM SPORTS**

Team sports are free to join and will begin towards the end of September. You will be notified when the sign-up sheet will appear outside the Elementary office.

#### **19. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extracurricular activities are offered each term (fall, winter, and spring) for approximately 10 weeks per session. There is an additional fee for these activities and information is sent home each term indicating the activities offered, dates, times, and costs.

#### **20. ACTIVITIES OFF-PREMISES, FIELD TRIPS, AND PARENT PARTICIPATION**

The school may, at times, take a walking trip with the class to local neighbourhood places such as the library, local park, grocery store, etc. This type of trip DOES NOT require a school bus and students will be walking in small groups with their teachers, without a separate permission form being signed by the parent/guardian. By signing the "**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ENROLMENT**" form, parents/guardians indicate their permission for such outings.

Scheduled school field/day trips are designed to complement our curriculum goals. Such day trips may include farms, museums, arenas, ski trips, etc. Parents will be notified of each trip in advance, and receive a form with details about the day trip including times, destination, bussing, and program information. The form will also include a permission slip to give consent for your child to attend this day trip. Individual permission slips must be signed and returned with the field trip fee before the child can participate. It is understood that as teachers accompany their students on all field trips, schooling is not provided to the student opting not to participate in the outing.

CMS welcomes parent participation on school trips, whenever possible.

## 21. PROGRESS REPORTS

The first report at the end of November is an Interim Progress Report, which represents a snapshot of your child's initial overall progress during the first few weeks of the school year. At the end of January, which is the mid-point of the school year, your child receives the second of three report cards to communicate how well she or he has achieved the overall curriculum expectations for each subject during the first half of the school year. The final report will go home in June at the end of the school year to ensure consistency in terms of how the students are evaluated.

Parent-teacher interviews are scheduled twice a year, following the distribution of interim progress reports and January progress reports.

## 22. HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS

In assessing a student's wellness and ability to participate and remain at school, staff take into consideration the following:

- a) The risk of spreading illness
- b) The student's ability to participate comfortably in the program
- c) The parent's responsibilities and schedule during the day

Staff use their judgement and consult with the supervisor/principal to decide whether to call a parent to inform them of their child's health or to ask the student to be picked up.

The following is a list of symptoms/illnesses for which a student may be sent home:

- Fever 38C or higher
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting (2 cases)
- Undiagnosed rash
- Communicable disease
- Persistent pain and discomfort
- Head Lice
- Uncomfortable or severe cough, OR
- The child is not well enough to participate in the program.

In the event that a child has been sent home, they are not to return to the program until:

- 1) A note from a medical doctor states they are well enough to return to school AND are not contagious, OR
- 2) They are on medication for 24 hours so as to no longer be contagious, OR
- 3) For diarrhea or vomiting, they have to be symptom-free for 48 hours
- 4) Are symptoms-free as per Public Health recommendations.

Parents are encouraged to arrive promptly if they receive a phone call from the staff indicating that their child is ill and needs to be picked up. Families are encouraged to have reliable backup plans of friends and/or family members who are authorized and able to help in the event that parents are unable to get to the school in a timely manner. In the event that parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contacts will be phoned.

## HOW TO KNOW WHEN THERE IS AN OUTBREAK

An outbreak occurs when there are 2 cases of gastroenteritis in a specific room within 48 hours.

Early detection of signs and symptoms through observation of students' health, as well as record keeping thereof, are crucial to the recognition and control of an outbreak.

CMS will notify York/Toronto Public Health if an outbreak is suspected. If an outbreak is confirmed, CMS will be following guidelines communicated to us by York/Toronto Public Health.

Public Health requires that children do not attend school when suffering from any communicable disease. Parents **must** play their part in trying to curb epidemics by not sending children to school when they are sick. The **recommended minimum period of exclusion** is as follows:

- Impetigo: 24 hours after treatment has been initiated. Lesions on exposed the skin should be covered.
- Pink Eye: 24 hours after appropriate antibiotics have started.
- Strep and Sore Throat: 24 hours after appropriate antibiotic treatment has started

- Scarlet Fever: 24 hours after treatment has started and the child can participate in activities.
- Whooping Cough Until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics have been completed. If untreated, until 21 days after the onset of the cough.
- Red Measles: 4 days after the beginning of the rash and when a child is able to participate.
- Rubella: 4 days after onset of rash.
- Mumps: Until 5 days after onset of parotid glands swelling.
- Norwalk: 24 hours symptom-free OR 48 hours symptom-free during an outbreak.
- Ringworm: Until the appropriate treatment has been started

A student who returns to school after contracting any of the above communicable diseases must bring a note from their physician indicating that they are in good health and able to return to school.

**Any students exhibiting signs of fever, diarrhea, or vomiting must be picked up immediately and may return to school only after they have been symptom-free for 24 hours / 48 hours for diarrhea or vomiting.**

**Students who require prescribed fever reduction medication every four hours (e.g. Tylenol) should NOT be at school. Staff cannot administer such medication without a doctor's note.**

### 23. MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

CMS will only administer prescription drugs that have a pharmacy label or are accompanied by a note from a physician. A Medication Dispensing Form must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian. This form will include the student's name, the name of the drug, the dosage to be given, the date of purchase, and instructions for storage and administration.

### 24. ALLERGIES / ANAPHYLAXIS / EPIPENS

CMS is a **NUT AWARE** environment. We do not allow items with nuts and/or nut bi-product in our centre for the safety of children with severe nut allergies. All allergies must be listed on the student's enrolment form. If your child develops any new allergies not listed on the form, please notify the office and the teacher(s) immediately.

**What is Anaphylaxis?** A severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medicine, latex, etc.

Epinephrine (EpiPen) is the first-line treatment for anaphylaxis and should be administered promptly during an anaphylactic reaction.

If a child is anaphylactic, prior to enrollment, parents/guardians must provide the school with an individual plan and emergency procedures for their child. Annually, all room staff and a trainer (Principal/Supervisor) will be trained by the child's parent or designated on the use of the epinephrine auto-injector (EPI PEN) and the details of the child's individual plan. Copies of the Individual Plans are kept in the child's file, classroom emergency bags, staff room, kitchen, gym, and in every classroom.

Parents are requested to advise the school office if their child develops an allergy, requires medication, and/or any change to the child's individual plan or treatment. The Individual plans will be revised yearly and as directed by the parent or physician.

### 25. SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

CMS conducts monthly Fire Safety and Lockdown Drills. These drills will ensure preparedness in case of a real emergency situation for staff and children so that everyone remains safe and accounted for.

Each staff member is instructed as to his/her responsibilities in the event of a fire, lockdown, or other emergencies, before commencing work for the first time.

Our Lockdown, Fire Safety, and Emergency Management Policies & Procedures set our roles and responsibilities of staff in case of an emergency. In case an evacuation is required, each CMS campus has an emergency shelter within walking distance of each location. Throughout the emergency, staff will:

- help keep children calm;
- take attendance to ensure that all children are accounted for;
- conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children;
- maintain constant supervision of the children; and
- engage children in activities, where possible.
-

### **Communication with parents in case of an emergency:**

When the “**all-clear**” notification is given:

- 1) As soon as possible, office staff or other designated persons must notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given.
- 2) Where disasters have occurred that did not require the evacuation of the centre, the office must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by email.
- 3) If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency has taken place, the office must provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume as soon as this is determined.

When the “**unsafe to return**” notification is given:

- 1) Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, the office will notify parents/guardians of the emergency, evacuation, and the location to pick up their children.
- 2) Where possible, the office staff will update the CMS’s voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the childcare centre has been evacuated, and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.

## **26. NUTRITION AND SNACKS**

### **CMS is a NUT-AWARE Environment.**

Students can bring lunch from home or sign up for a hot nutritious CMS lunch for an extra monthly fee.

Please ensure that your child eats a nutritious breakfast at home and send in snacks for both the morning and afternoon. Snacks are **NOT** provided for elementary students.

### **CMS Food Guidelines:**

- Bring only nutritious (NUT-FREE) food items.
- Chocolate, candy, chips, soda pop, and junk food are not permitted.

Students are not to share their food with others or to bring gum or candy to school. Please inform the school of ANY allergies or special dietary requirements for your child.

Students are not allowed to chew gum while in class or while participating in school activities.

## **27. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

We love to celebrate birthdays with our students. CMS encourages sharing healthy snacks for your child’s birthday. We do not allow cakes, cupcakes, or treats **with sugary icing, custard, whipping cream, etc.** We only allow sharing of healthy snacks such as fruit/vegetable trays, cheese and cracker trays, or cheese pizza. All food brought to school must be packaged with ingredients listed on the label. Also note that balloons, party hats, loot bags, etc. may **NOT** come to school. Please save these items for celebrations at home.

## **28. PICTURES AND VIDEOS**

The school may take various pictures and videos throughout the course of the year that may be displayed in the school, on the school’s website, yearbook, and/or on promotional material. These pictures can range from class trips to various activities the children participate in throughout the year. These pictures will **NOT** be used for any other purpose.